

JACK
CHUMLEIGH
AT
BOARDING-SCHOOL
by
MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN

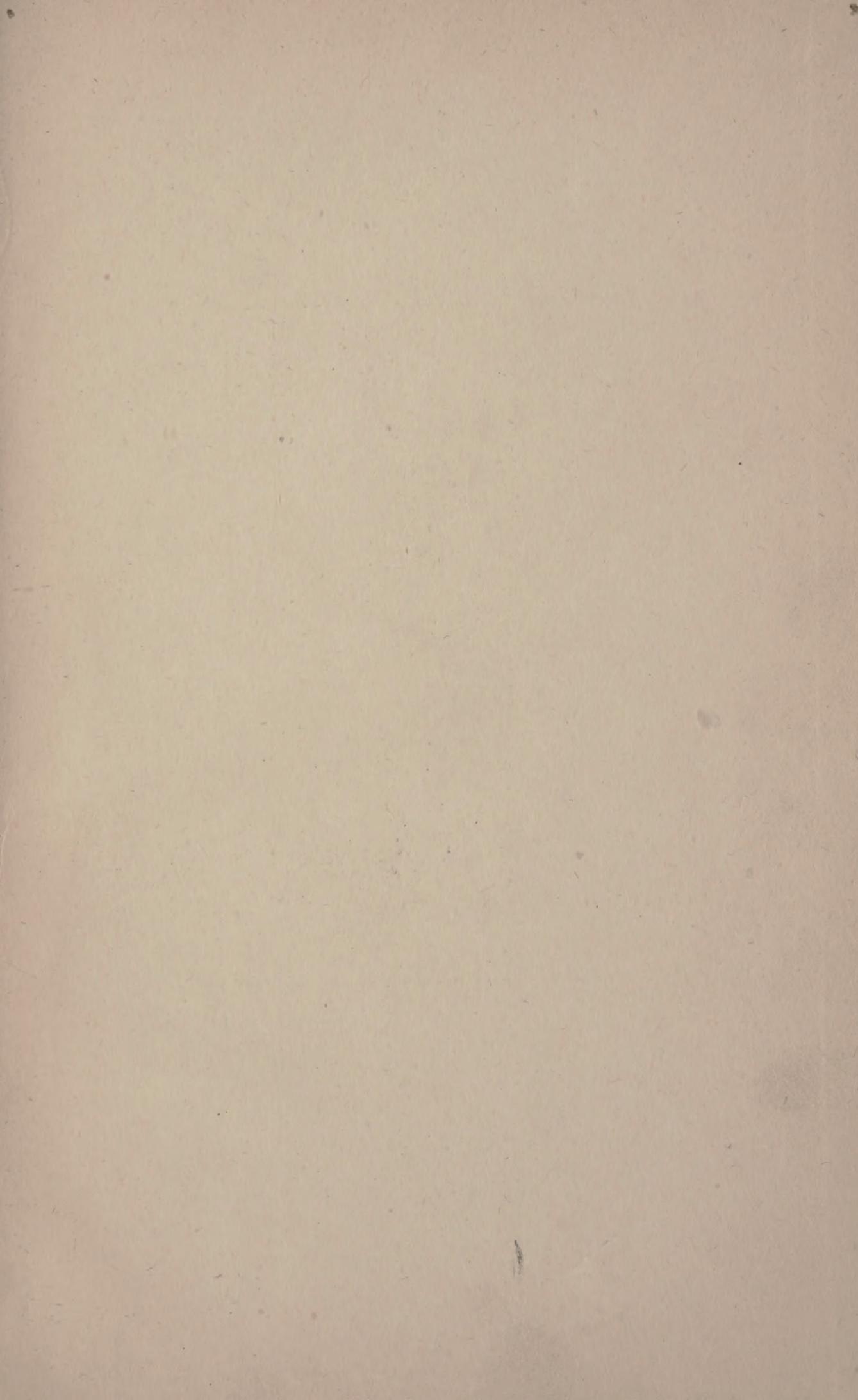


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Jack Chumleigh 
at Boarding-School.

BY

Maurice Francis Egan,

*Author of "Jasper Thorne," "The Leopard of Lancianus,"
"In a Brazilian Forest," etc., etc.*



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TO
THE REV. DR. D. E. HUDSON, C. S. C.,
AND THE OTHER BOYS WHO LEARNED TO LIKE
JACK CHUMLEIGH,
IN THE *AVE MARIA*.

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Jack Chumleigh at Boarding-School.

I.

THE DAY BEFORE.

THE boys, Jack Chumleigh, his brother, Thomas Jefferson, his cousin, Baby Maguire, and their friend, Bob Bently, were about to go away to school. The thought of it was not altogether pleasant, although, under the direction of Miss McBride, who had been their teacher for several years, their path had not been entirely strewn with popcorn and peanuts. Still, boys like new places, and, at the end of vacation, they found their sadness tempered by hope.

Still, the best of the year seemed over. Watermelons were ripe, great white lilies, heavy with perfume were blooming in the yards, and the grapes in the Chumleigh yard were growing a rich purple. Baseball games were going on in all the lots, and boys were talking of football;—the very thought of school made the boys sick. But a new school would be better than the old. And at times Faky Dillon felt positively joyful at the prospect. At such times he burst into song:

“ A new school for me,
Where we shall be free,
With lessons an hour a day;—
No Latin to speak of,
No Grammar to squeak of,
And little to do but to play.”

Bob Bently shook his head ; “ You can’t keep up my spirits with rot like that,” he said. “ We’d better face the worst.”

Little did they dream of what was in store for them.

Jack Chumleigh had grown almost an inch taller during vacation ; Faky Dillon did not seem to have changed very much ; Thomas Jefferson had become so stout that the buttons of his jacket dragged the buttonholes. There was a manlier look about Bob Bently ; Baby Maguire looked very much like himself ;—in fact, the boys had grown more inside than outside. They had learned many new things ; but the world to them was a place in which all unpleasant things were to be avoided, and education a puzzling process for forcing them to remember nearly everything they would rather forget.

On this Thursday in September they had paid their farewell visit to Miss McBride. She had been very kind to them, and had presented each of them with her *carte de visite*—a small oblong photograph, in which she appeared in a black silk gown distended by hoops, her hair smoothed

down from her brow, a large watch-chain dangling from her waist, her right hand resting on a figured tablecloth, her left grasping a large vase of flowers, and a sweet smile on her face. She had also given good advice to them.

“Be solicitous to show yourselves worthy of the school over which I have presided for so many years; and never put your hands in your pockets.”

All the boys, with the exception of Thomas Jefferson, simultaneously showed their hands.

“A graceful deportment when in society will much assist in your success in life. One of my pupils is now first-mate of a large schooner which plies between Wilmington and Philadelphia. He is an ornament to the navy. Do you think,” she said, fixing her eyes on Thomas Jefferson, who had thrust into his breeches pocket a small bottle full of water and a tadpole, and who was compelled to keep the bottle upright,—“do you think that you will ever arrive to eminence in any pursuit by keeping your hands in your pockets?”

Thomas Jefferson blushed painfully. To take his hand off that bottle—which, unhappily, was uncorked—would be to lose a tadpole for which he had swopped a Calcutta stamp. If he had been sure that tadpoles could live without water, he would not have minded a partial bath; as it was, he was divided between Miss

McBride's stern gaze and the fear of losing the tadpole.

"I hope, Master Thomas Jefferson Chumleigh," she went on, "that you look on the politeness of your friends rather as an object of envy than of scorn. I have long observed your sullen disposition, and regretted it. An old pupil of mine, Jonathan McSweeney, has lately been nominated for Congress; and you need never hope to attain this dignity if you keep your hands in your pockets."

This was too much for Thomas Jefferson. He drew his hand from the bottle: it sank on its side, and he felt a cool stream of water trickling down his right leg. He imagined, too, that he felt the tadpole wriggling in its death throes; but he held his hand in full view.

Miss McBride allowed herself to smile. She shook hands with each of the boys, gave them her photographs wrapped in tissue-paper, and hoped that they would call frequently when they came home.

"Do not forget," she said, as they were leaving the doorstep, "among the trials and triumphs, the thorns and roses of scholastic life, that my school, humble as it is, was really your *alma mater*."

Faky Dillon was quite touched. Fine language always had a great effect upon him. Tears came to his eyes.

"I always liked Miss McBride," said Jack. "It makes me homesick to think of going to a strange school."

Bob Bently sighed.

"There was always something homelike about that school. You knew what to expect. We've got used to one kind of grown people; it is rather hard to have to meet a new set. You knew pretty surely what Miss McBride would do next, but you can never tell what new teachers are up to. And men are crankier than women."

"I tell you, Thomas Jefferson," said Faky Dillon, hotly, "if you go on disgracing us something will drop,—that's all. Why couldn't you keep your hands out of your pockets while Miss McBride was making her speech?"

"I wasn't going to have my tadpole killed," said Thomas Jefferson, drawing the half-filled bottle from his pocket. "It's all right! Skinny McMullen caught it down in the Neck, and I gave him one of my Indian stamps for it. I don't see why Miss McBride need have been so cross. If she had been more polite, I might have given her the tadpole. Skinny's got a lot of cat-tails, too, he wants to swop for stamps."

"You never will have sense," said Faky Dillon. "I believe you would interrupt George Washington's farewell address if you could, Thomas Jefferson. If you had not been so silly with your old tadpole, I'd have thought of some-

thing to say. You just bothered me so that when Miss McBride gave me her picture and said, 'I hope you are glad to get this little sowe-neer of your teacher,' I said, 'Oh, not at all!' I feel like going back to tell her I didn't mean it."

"We haven't time," said Baby Maguire; "the watermelon may be at home. You know Miley Galligan promised to send us a watermelon by express. He said we'd have it to-day, anyway."

"That's true," said Bob Bently, losing his gloom. "He said he'd show us what Fulton Market could do in the way of watermelons. Let's hurry home."

The boys invaded the Bently house first. The melon was not there. It occurred to them that it would be great fun to creep along on the shed and the roof of the summer kitchen, and thus enter the Chumleigh house. It was easy to do; and long experience had taught them that the less attention they attracted to their movements, the better it would be for them. Making their way through the window, over the roof that covered Susan and Rebecca, they carefully sought for the expected watermelon. At last Jack found it near the refrigerator in the cellar. It had arrived during their absence. It was a monster, and carefully cut into its rind were the initials "M.G." in the middle of a five-pointed star. The boys stole down to look at it. On a tag tied to its beautiful dark-green rind was the address to

“Mr. J. Chumleigh.” Jack concluded that it would be well to put it on the ice for a while:—hot melons were not to his taste. With some difficulty the gift was hoisted into the refrigerator. A few other things were displaced in the process, and a plate or two already embedded in the ice broke; but the melon was at last arranged in its resting-place.

This done, our friends went up to Jack’s room. It was not so splendid as it had been. The baseball bats and masks, the football suit, and a pair of rapiers were visible on the wall; but the drapery and other pretty things sent by Uncle Ferrier had gone over to beautify little Guy’s new room. The room was neat; Jack, especially since he had been able to add some adornments to it, and to consider it his own personal property, had taken great pride in keeping it so.

The boys distributed themselves on the chairs and the bed, and their unusual quietness brought thoughts of the terrible to-morrow to them.

“It is awful to think that this is the last time I shall be here until Christmas,” Bob said. “I do wonder what Professor Grigg’s school will be like. After all, Miss McBride wasn’t bad. She doesn’t understand boys, that’s all; but she might have been worse.”

“Professor Grigg is a man like ourselves,” said Faky. “He’ll know what good interference means, and he won’t talk at you all the time.

With Miss McBride, it was 'Do this!' or 'Do that!' every minute. I don't say boys are naturally good," he added; "I don't say they like work; but grown-ups can't expect them to be good if they don't believe there is any goodness in boys. The trouble with Miss McBride was that when she was in a good humor she thought we were all good; but when she was cross, we were too bad to live."

"I don't know," said Thomas Jefferson. "Some grown-up people seem to forget that they were ever boys; or they must have been very bad boys in their time, if they judge us by what they were."

There was silence. Baby uttered a long sigh. The prospect of exile in an unknown land made his heart sink.

"It's your fault, Baby!" Thomas Jefferson burst out. "If you hadn't been so bad, they'd never have thought of sending us away. I was passing the dining-room the other night, and I heard father say, 'They're better at home; or if they must go away, send them to Georgetown or Notre Dame, or some other big Catholic school.' And then mother said: 'No: Baby might meet a class of boys who would not understand him. He is a peculiar child. I prefer Professor Grigg's for him, because he is a sensitive boy. And, of course, his parents would think it strange if we separated the children.'—'Keep

them at home, or send them to one of the great schools,' said father.—'I couldn't be happy if I thought Baby was among men, and without a woman's care,' mother said. 'You have often told me about your college life, and sometimes I shudder when you tell me of your awful games. If Baby went to one of the big schools, I don't think that the prefects would see that he had his nerve-drops three times a day, or warm his bed—as his mother insists shall be done—with a hot iron every cold night; and he must have so many little attentions.'—'I don't remember,' father said, 'that Brother Jovian ever warmed my bed, but I do remember—' Father stopped short and asked me what I wanted; but I heard enough to know that we've got to go to a girly-girly school just because Baby is mean."

"Maybe he can't help it," said Faky Dillon; "but we know all about his nerves, and grown-up people are very strange not to see that he has just been spoiled. I don't care whether Professor Grigg's school is girly-girly or not, but I don't want to leave home,—that's all. It makes me sick to think of it. We've all been good for two weeks. Mother said the other day that I was too good to live. Now, suppose we go and tell all our fathers and mothers that we will be just as good all the time. I'm sure they might let us stay home until next year."

"The worst of it is," said Bob Bently, whit-

ting at a piece of wood which he was rapidly turning into the keel of a yacht, "that you're not sure when you are good. Now, often when I've been really bad—and I used to be *awful* before I went to confession,—nobody seemed to mind. But now I sometimes do a thing without thinking that it is bad, and everybody just pounces on me. Grown people don't seem to mind the big things; but you suddenly do something that doesn't seem much—and you are gone!"

Baby Maguire screwed up his face, as if he were about to utter a piercing howl.

"What are you all jumping on me for?" he demanded. "I don't want to go to boarding-school. And a boy can't help having nerves, can he?"

The boys looked sternly at Baby.

"It wouldn't be so bad if you could take the 'extras' at these boarding-schools. If I could learn only instrumental music and take vocal lessons and a few nice things, I think I'd get on," said Baby, encouraged by the boys' silence. "All the pleasant things are charged extra."

"They don't put algebra down as an extra: they make you take *that*," said Jack, sadly. "And ancient history is not an extra. I hoped it might be; for then father might not let me take it, as he says times are hard. I say, Baby," Jack broke forth in sudden wrath, "you ought to

be ashamed of yourself! Father would never have thought of school if it wasn't for you."

Baby wrinkled his face.

"I feel the nerves coming on," he said; "and I must not be bothered."

"We'll *nerve* you," exclaimed Bob, "if you go on that way! We'll bother you!"

Baby retired to a corner of the room, a picture of injured innocence. Faky Dillon went to the table and began to write with a very thick pencil. Jack and Bob sat disconsolately by the window; and Thomas Jefferson, unable to endure the sadness, volunteered to go down into the cellar to examine the watermelon.

"Well," said Jack, "we've got to do our best. I've learned one thing so far—that you must stand and endure things. It is like being in the sea at Atlantic City when you're a little fellow. A wave comes and fills your eyes and ears with water. You think that everybody ought to know how you feel and help you, but nobody does. You have to stand up against the next wave as best you can. A fellow must feel that he is right, and fight it out. Father doesn't think I'm much of a boy, but I am going to show him. What I've gone through has taught me a good many things, Bob; and one of these is that God will see you out of every scrape, if you only do your part. Of course, if you lie and sneak, you can't expect any help."

“That’s true,” said Bob. “Little Guy did me a great deal of good. We’ll go to see him tomorrow morning. Our train,” he added, with a deep sigh, “doesn’t start until 5:30 in the evening.”

“It will seem years till Christmas,” said Jack, with another sigh. “I suppose we’ll have to bow and scrape to Mrs. Grigg, and toe the mark to the professor, and not be able to move without a tag on us. The catalogue says that ‘department’ is regularly attended to. All sorts of frills, I suppose. I wish we were going to one of the big schools you read about,—to a big college. I don’t believe they’ll let us play Rugby at Colonnade House, as they call this school. It will just suit Baby,—all coddling and sissy business.”

Faky raised his head in triumph.

“I have found it at last!” he said. “Here it is. It’s my *cheef-dever*, I think.” And he read:

“Oh, tell the truth quite frankly,—
Oh, tell the truth, my boys!
You may suffer for a moment,
But long will be your joys.”

“I don’t think much of it,” said Bob, in a low-spirited tone. “It’s true, but there’s no snap in it.”

“You don’t know a good thing when you see it,” retorted Faky. “A poet can’t always be making a lively moke of himself to please people.

It took me a long time to find that rhyme, I can tell you. Here's a light thing that may suit you :

“ If Professor M. Grigg
Cuts up a pig,
And gives us the head and the feet,
We'll cry out aloud :
' We're not at all proud,
But we want something else for to eat.' ”

“ No, it won't do,” said Bob, yawning. “ We want a new poet, with some snap in him—hello ! What's that ? ”

Something heavy had fallen against the door, and the voice of Thomas Jefferson was heard calling for help. Bob threw open the door, and Thomas and the watermelon fell inward. There was a dull, heavy sound, followed by a splash. For a moment it was hard to tell which was Thomas and which was the melon.

Then he arose, panting.

“ I ought not to have tried to carry it upstairs, but I just wanted to show you fellows what I could do.”

“ And you've done it ! ” said Bob. “ That watermelon is smashed in half.”

“ We can eat it,” said Baby, gouging out a handful of the crimson fruit. “ It is spoiled,” he said. “ Too ripe.”

The boys gathered in sadness about the wreck. They heard Susan and Rebecca talking in the kitchen.

“Oh, I say,” said Faky Dillon, “let’s drop the halves on the kitchen roof; they will make an awful bang.”

“No,” said Bob. “We’ve got to be good. We’ve had nothing against us for a long time now ——”

“But this is only fun,” Faky said, impatiently. “Susan and Rebecca will think the world has come to an end, and then we’ll tell them.”

Faky seized half the huge melon and dashed it out the window.

The commotion in the kitchen following the thud and splash charmed them all so much that Jack and Bob, with broad grins, let the other half of the melon fall on the wooden roof. The boys watched, unobserved, the flight of Susan and Rebecca. Jack and Bob looked at each other with despair in their eyes.

“We’re in for it again,” said Jack, sadly. “I wish we hadn’t done it. I do believe they’ve gone for a policeman. I wish I had thought.”

Faky burst into uncontrollable laughter.

“How Susan ran! Baby and I had better get out on the roof and throw away the *deebriess*.”

Faky Dillon and Baby and Thomas Jefferson assented to this, and long before the ambulance had arrived all traces of the fractured watermelon had disappeared.

As the sound of the ambulance reached them, they rushed to the window.

“I think I’d better go home,” faltered Faky Dillon.

“No,” answered Bob. “There are Mr. and Mrs. Chumleigh below. Let us face the music!”

The sad-eyed band slowly descended, to meet them on the front steps.

II.

A TERRIBLE SCARE.

“NOBODY knows how I feel,” Susan said, solemnly,—“nobody!” She took a flatiron from the rack in the kitchen and ran her fingers across it. “Sad to the sad!” she added; while Rebecca, the young colored girl from Baltimore, gazed at her in awe. “In the old country some people call these irons sadirons.”

“Law sakes!” said Rebecca. “Ain’t that ignorant!” And Rebecca showed her teeth cheerfully.

“It’s *not* ignorant,” said Susan, with dignity. “The people in the old country knew what they were talking about before you were born. And when I took down the iron it was a coincidence. ’Tis well it’s called a sadiron in the old country.”

“I didn’t mean ignorant,” said Rebecca, opening the oven door to see that the pan of apple-dumplings was “doing well.” “I meant mighty queer.”

Susan shook her head, with a sigh.

“Education is lost on the likes of you,” she said. “I wish the cook was here to understand my feelings. ‘Be careful of the apple-dumplings,’

were the last words she said ; ‘ and see that there’s plenty of nutmeg in the sauce, for so ’—Susan’s voice faltered,—‘ for so *he* liked them.’ ”

“ Law sakes ! ” repeated Rebecca, opening her eyes wide and looking at Susan, who was slowly drawing a lump of white wax over the surface of the flatiron. “ Law sakes, you talk so sorrowful you make me feel like crying,—shuah ! ”

It was plain that Susan was not altogether displeased by this sympathy.

“ Many’s a time this kitchen was different,” said Susan, slowly. “ There’s been doin’s here worthy of the Dark Ages, when Malachi wore the collar of gold he won from the proud invader.”

“ Law sakes ! ” exclaimed Rebecca, looking around. “ Spooks ! ”

“ Is it the seventh daughter of a seventh son you’re talking to ? Spooks ! Is it spooks I’d be thinkin’ of, and me with a banshee in the family that I am *that* intimate with ! Be careful of the dumplings, Rebecca. Sure they’re the last dumplings that he will eat under this roof ; for I dreamed of a wedding last night. Be careful of them, Rebecca ; for cook’s heart’s in every one of them, and them were her last words ! ‘ Let everything be done decent and in order,’ she said, as I said good-bye at the door.”

Rebecca had recently entered Mrs. Chumleigh’s service,—or, rather the service of Susan and the

cook. The cook's rheumatism had made her suffer extremely in September, and Rebecca had been sent by Mrs. Chumleigh's cousin in Baltimore to assist in the heavier work in the kitchen. The cook had gone out on this Thursday to pay her monthly visit to little Guy, who now lived with Uncle Mike and his wife far up town.

"If I had spilt the salt this morning, or there had been a dog howling last night, I couldn't feel worse," she said. "Ah! it's the likes of you that have a good time, with no thought at all, at all. But when I think of what's gone before,—when I think of what I've gone through, and what I've been used to, Rebecca, it's hard."

No sound, except Susan's sigh and the soft sound of the flatiron gliding over the linen on the board, broke the silence. Rebecca, who loved to have her feelings "torn up," forgot the apple-dumplings and stared at her superior officer.

"'Twas in this very kitchen one of the grandest parties of the season took place in honor of one of my cousins from the maythropolis and the cook's Uncle Mike. 'Twas grand."

"Did you have a cake walk?" asked Rebecca, showing her teeth.

"A cake walk! Is it insulting me you are? It's little you know about the ways of society. But how could you—the likes of *you*?"

"Well, I've lived in the best Ma'yland families," replied Rebecca, indignantly. "There

ain't no families like the East'n Sho' families, shuah!"

"We'll change the subject; for I might lose my temper before I've said my last penance," said Susan. "I can point you out where they all sat. There was my cousin Miley,—and he was a little seraphim, smiling, and with his hair greased beautifully. And they were all here—then."

Rebecca, who was uncertain whether anybody was dead or not, tried to look sad. She had made so many mistakes since she had entered into the sacred domain of the Chumleigh kitchen that she was generally in a dazed state of mind, but always ready to agree with anything that might be said. She had a great fear of Susan's supernatural gifts as the seventh daughter of a seventh son, and it is to be feared that Susan had discovered this. Rebecca would have been glad to know what dreadful thing had happened or was about to happen, but she was afraid to ask; for Susan had a way of making her explanations as hazy as possible.

"It's education that's done it," said Susan; "and if only them that could take it had education, 'twould be better for the world. If education were only like vaccination, and would take to them that need it and let other people alone, 'twould be the better for us all. Well, it's Miss McBride's fault. She's the teacher of the angel boys, Rebecca; and she's one that education

should never have taken to. I knew her when she lived in a little street and hadn't a Sunday bonnet."

"Law sakes!" murmured Rebecca.

"She's gone and taught the dear children all about Soprates and Julian Cæsar and Themistockings, so that their papa and mamma have to send them away to get 'em right again. And it's just breaking the hearts of me and cook to see them go. And, though I do say it, it's never a cross feeling or an angry word they've had from me or cook. 'Tis been like a bit of paradise with the boys around. To think of Baby Maguire—and him used to so much—going to boarding-school! Well I mind the day he was sick. If he was my own flesh and blood I couldn't have been kinder to him. And Bob Bently is to go too; he's the neighbor boy, and a better boy never lived. 'Susan,' said the cook as she went out—and these were her last words,—'see that there's a big Dutch cake made for Bob Bently's box, if I forget it.' Ah! cook's been a mother to him,—that she has. And Faky Dillon, as they call him,—if there was ever a little saint on earth, that's him! The poetry just gushes out of him; he's what they call a jaynus. 'Susan,' the cook said as she tied her bonnet strings—and these were her last words—I seem to hear them in my ears yet,—'Susan, make the jumbles for Faky Dillon sweet. Maybe he'll never eat another jumble,' she said;

‘for in life we’re in the midst of death, and railroad trains are uncertain.’”

“Mighty me!” said Rebecca, shuddering. “I hope they won’t *all* die.”

“There’s no telling. To-day we are what we are, and to-morrow we’re cast into the oven—you Rebecca, you lazy coon! take a piece out of that broom and see if those loaves of bread are done.”

Rebecca sprang like a frightened rabbit to the oven, and then Susan resumed her confidences.

“Now I remember it was not exactly in this kitchen we had the party: ’twas in the winter kitchen. This is built out from the house, to be cooler in summer; but ’tis much the same thing. The cook’s Uncle Mike married a good woman but beneath him, Rebecca,—it’s the one cross of the cook’s life, Rebecca; and don’t you ever speak of it.”

“Law sakes!” cried Rebecca, who had restored the loaves of bread to the oven. “I don’t speak to no cook unless she speaks to me. I ain’t sayin’ nothing against her, but she looks at me as if I was low-down white trash. I’m quiet enough when *she’s* around.”

“She’s not used to American ways yet, Rebecca. In the old country she didn’t know what it was to wet her hands, and it took her years to know the difference between a bucket and a dish-pan. But the past is past, and she can’t

bear to have it mentioned. As I was saying, she does her duty, and treats Uncle Mike's wife as if she were her equal. She never makes the slightest difference between her and me, but her heart's palpitating all the time."

"Law sakes!" cried the open-mouthed Rebecca. "I don't see how she lives!"

"Lives!" said Susan, shaking her head, mournfully. "There's them that loves dear gazelles and them that don't; and them that don't are by far the happiest, Rebecca. You remember the poetry about it, don't you?"

"Law sakes!" said Rebecca, delighted with the compliment. "Of course I do."

"Now I lay me down to sleep,—"

Susan smiled in a superior manner.

"Let it pass," she said. "Rebecca, look after the jumbles."

Rebecca darted to the big oven again, as if struck by lightning.

"When the boys are gone, they're *gone!*" resumed Susan, calmly.

"And it's my belief that Miss McBride will have a great deal to answer for,—teaching helpless boys things that their parents have to spend money a-having them unlearn at other schools. 'Susan,' the cook said, with her hand on the door-knob—and these were her last words,—'it is the educated that suffer. If I had me life to

go over again, it's little I'd have to do with sub-stracshin or compound fractures.' And when I see what's going on around me—families broken up, and children that were blessings to all around them going away forever maybe,—I think she's right."

"Mighty me!" exclaimed Rebecca, giggling. "I'm very glad I haven't much education."

"It's easy seen," retorted Susan, grimly; "for you're letting something burn!"

The rebuked Rebecca dived into the huge oven; and Susan, who was enjoying herself very much, began to revel in gloom again.

"It's in few families a girl could live," she said, "and see such angelic boys,—for the nature of boys is not angelic——"

"Law sakes!" interrupted Rebecca. "Northe'n boys must be mighty different from Southe'n boys, if they're angels."

"But you haven't seen much of 'em, Rebecca—and you won't, because they're going away. 'I can't bear to think of it,' said the cook, as I buttoned her glove on the doorstep—and they were almost her last words,—'it's just as if the breath was leaving my body when I think of what will happen to-morrow.' These were *almost* her last words."

The kitchen had begun to grow dark; for it was a cloudy day, and twilight had set in earlier than usual.

“It reminds me of the time of the five dark days. I have a creeping all over me, Rebecca.”

“Law sakes! The five dark days! When did that happen?” asked Rebecca, her eyes bulging out.

“You just ’tend to that bread! And the boys were as gentle as lambs. Well, them that lives longest sees the most.”

Rebecca had lighted the gas jet, when something occurred that turned her face almost white. It was her opinion that the five dark days had come back with a crash. A heavy body hit the roof of the kitchen with a dull thud. Susan screamed; Rebecca threw her apron over her head and clung to the ironing table. The sound was not repeated at once; but when Rebecca had tremblingly uncovered her head, and Susan had opened her lips to speak, another thud was heard. Susan and Rebecca threw themselves on their knees and clung to each other.

“There’s murder going on on the roof!” exclaimed Susan.

Rebecca, scarcely knowing what she did, began to utter a series of howls. This proceeding brought back Susan’s sense of propriety. She ran into the yard; she could perceive in the gloom of gathering twilight what seemed to be a dark body on the sloping roof of the kitchen. She took hold of the post that upheld the roof; but drew herself away quickly, for her hand was

at once moistened with a sticky substance. She uttered a scream. Could it be blood?

She believed that there was nobody in the house. Mrs. Chumleigh had gone out in the afternoon, and Mr. Chumleigh had announced his intention of calling for her at the house to which she had gone. The boys had started to say good-bye to Miss McBride.

Susan rushed into the kitchen and looked at her hand: it bore a red stain. She washed it hastily at the sink.

“Rebecca,” she said, “there has been a man killed on the roof of the kitchen. Maybe they were listening to what we were saying. If you have to go into court, Rebecca, don’t you open your lips.”

Rebecca, her eyes bulging to a tremendous extent, her mouth wide open, her face a greyish hue, could only murmur: “I’m done gone! I’m done gone!”

“Come with me,” Susan said, “and we’ll find a policeman.”

They threw their shawls hastily about them and ventured out into the twilight. The street was silent. To Susan and Rebecca, there seemed to be something mysterious in this silence,—something threatening. In a half hour men would begin to come from their workshops and offices; then the street would be noisy enough. Rebecca clung to Susan in abject fear. They

went the length of the square, still no policeman was visible.

“O Rebecca,” Susan said, suddenly, with a gasp, “I’ve left the house alone! Do you go back!”

“Go back?” said Rebecca. “I don’t go back with no two dead bodies on the roof.”

“Two!” exclaimed Susan. “Were there two? Did you see two?”

“I’m done sure there were two.”

Susan could say no more; it was plainly unreasonable to expect poor Rebecca to keep house with no two dead bodies on the kitchen roof.

“I knew something would happen, by the way the cook looked at me. ‘Susan,’ she said—and it was almost her last word,—‘it is a fine day for walking.’ Why should she have said that, if it didn’t mean something? And a fine day it is, with two corpses on Mrs. Chumleigh’s kitchen roof.”

“I’ll leave the place this very night,” said Rebecca.

“You will, will you?” said Susan, grasping her arm. “You’ll go further and fare worse; and I’ll keep an eye on you, and the eye of a seventh daughter ——”

“Oh, no!” said Rebecca, in affright. All sorts of horrors seemed to threaten her. “I’ll stay—at least till after the funerals.”

“You don’t think we’re going to muss up our

house having funerals for two strange dead bodies, do you? Well, I like that!"

Rebecca began to cry.

"I done wish I was back in Princess Anne county," she said, under her breath.

Susan whirled her along the street. Here and there groups of happy children were playing on the pavements in front of the red brick houses, with the beautifully white steps. Susan was glad to see one group in a ring, singing:

"Gravel, green gravel, your grass is so green!"

It was a relief to hear such commonplace words in her tragical state of mind.

"I wish we had alarmed the neighbors," she said. "But isn't that a policeman?"

There was a figure in blue before them. He was standing at the corner of a street. Susan recognized him at once: he was a friend of the car conductor to whom cook often sent hot coffee. Susan felt that the proper thing was to faint at once, but she could not trust Rebecca to be sufficiently sympathetic; so she ran rapidly up to James Markis, which was the policeman's name.

"Can I do anything for you, ladies?" he asked, politely.

"Oh, you can, Mr. Markis!" said Susan, breathlessly. "We were both talking in the kitchen,

and I was thinking of cook's last words, when I noticed that it suddenly became dark ——”

“Two dead bodies on the roof!” interrupted Rebecca, her teeth chattering.

“Oh, it's Miss Susan!” said the policeman, straightening himself. “I am glad to be of use. How is Missus Cook?”

“Oh, you don't know what has happened!” cried Susan. “Her last words were ——”

“Dear! dear!” said the policeman, replacing his club in his belt. “It must have been very sudden; she was quite a stout woman, too. And she was always kind to Jim. A power of good her hot coffee has done Jim on cold days. I'm sorry she has gone. Well! well!”

Susan burst into tears.

“I knew by the strange look on her face that she was doomed. O Mr. Markis, did it happen at Uncle Mike's! Oh, take me to her!”

“There's two dead bodies on the roof,” muttered Rebecca, who could understand only one thing at a time.

“What roof?” asked the policeman, who was beginning to be slightly bewildered.

“Our roof, Mr. Policeman,” answered Rebecca. “Law sakes! And we've been all soaked with human gore.”

“Do you mean this?” asked the policeman, hurriedly.

“Yes, it's true,” said Susan, weeping; “but

I'd as lief there were twenty bodies on the roof, if cook was only alive. I never shall forget her last words,—never! Something told me that I should never see her again.”

“I'd better ring for an ambulance. Perhaps you'd like to ride back in the ambulance, ladies?”

“Sir!” exclaimed Susan. “What! Me demane myself that way and my best friend breathing her last! If you'd call a carriage——”

“But how did the cook get on the roof?” began the policeman. Before Susan could answer this astonishing question, he sighted an empty carriage. “Take these ladies to Mr. Chumleigh's,” he said authoritatively to the cabman.

Susan was helped into the vehicle, and Rebecca followed, grinning widely. She forgot all her recent terrors in the joy of driving in a coach with a glass front.

Just as Mr. and Mrs. Chumleigh reached their door—it was about six o'clock—an ambulance drove up with a great clatter. The policeman dropped down from the seat, and said politely:

“I hope it won't alarm Mrs. Chumleigh, sir, but there are two dead bodies on the roof, and one of them is your cook. She passed away suddenly.”

“Good Heavens!” exclaimed the amazed master of the house.

“And where is Susan?” gasped Mrs. Chum-

leigh. "What *does* it mean? Where are the boys?"

A carriage had driven up behind the ambulance; it stopped, and Susan and Rebecca jumped out.

"O Mrs. Chumleigh," Susan said, in tears, "that I should live to tell it! And her last words in my mind all day!"

"It must be true," said Mr. Chumleigh. "Poor cook! she was very stout; it was probably apoplexy. But what was she doing on the kitchen roof? And where are the boys? Ah, here they are!"

Jack, Bob Bently, Faky Dillon and Baby Maguire appeared on the steps, looking much pleased and innocently surprised.

"Here, Susan," said Mr. Chumleigh, "you take Mrs. Chumleigh over to Mrs. Bently's, while I and the boys investigate."

"Poor innocents!" said Susan, as she walked beside her astonished mistress. "Little do they dream of what is before them!"

III.

THE LAST STRAW.

GREAT was Mr. Chumleigh's consternation at what he had seen and heard.

"There must be some mistake, some exaggeration," he said. "It cannot be possible that so terrible a thing has happened. What have you boys been doing?" he asked, sharply.

Mr. Markis, the two men who had come with the ambulance, and Rebecca turned their eyes on the boys.

"What is the matter?" asked Baby Maguire. "O uncle, what is the matter? We were just up in Jack's room waiting for dinner."

Jack, Faky, Bob Bently, and Thomas Jefferson breathed sighs of relief. Suppose they should have been obliged to tell about the watermelon? It would have meant school at once, without the reprieve they hoped for.

"Oh, dear!" said Faky Dillon, "I wish we hadn't done it."

"You're always wishing that, Faky,—*after* you've done things," replied Thomas Jefferson, in a whisper.

"This is a terrible thing, boys," said Mr.

Markis, gravely. "The cook is dead,—died suddenly on the roof of your house."

Jack's face became pale.

"O father!" he said, "I am so sorry! She was such a good woman."

"Law sakes!" said Rebecca, beginning to weep aloud. "She was an angel,—that's what she was! None of your po' white trash. You'd think she'd always lived in an East'n Sho' family. And to think of her going off just like the flowers of the field!"

The boys looked up at Mr. Chumleigh with shocked faces. Baby Maguire whispered to Faky Dillon:

"I *knew* something would happen to prevent our going to school."

Faky punched him quietly in the ribs.

"She was such a good woman!" Bob Bently echoed, moist around the eyes.

"Take her for all and all," said Mr. Markis, who was given to literature, "we ne'er shall see her like again. Her hot coffee has helped many a fainting fellow-creature. But hadn't we better be doing something? Suppose we go into the house with the surgeon here?"

Mr. Chumleigh again looked sharply at the boys. The clear, innocent expression on their faces when they first appeared had awakened his suspicions. He saw now that they were really sorry. Still, he had some doubts.

“How was this sad affair discovered?” he asked, as they entered the house.

“I heard the dead bodies fall,” said Rebecca, delighted to be the object of general attention. The surgeon and a man from the ambulance corps had already gone up to the attic by way of reaching the roof.

“The bodies fall!” repeated Mr. Chumleigh, in horror. He lighted the hall lamp. The boys gathered closely around him. “What do you mean, Rebecca? What bodies?”

“I don’t know,” said Rebecca, twisting her apron. “I heard them going on *awful* on the roof, and Susan was all sprinkled with gore.”

“Upon my word,” said Mr. Chumleigh, glancing again at the frightened faces of the boys, “this is a pretty state of things. I want to know where you were, young gentlemen, while all this was taking place?”

“At Miss McBride’s,” answered Jack, promptly. “We went to say good-bye, and she gave us her picture. Cook had gone to see little Guy. It’s her day out, you know ——”

“And when we got back, uncle,” interrupted Baby Maguire, “we just sat in Jack’s room and told one another how we loved our home, and how we hated to go away from you and our dear teacher.”

“And what else?” asked Mr. Chumleigh, sternly.

“We opened the watermelon Miley sent to us,” continued Baby, “and it was bad. Then we heard a noise at the door, and we came down.”

“There was no harm in all that,” said Mr. Chumleigh. “No—stay where you are, boys; the surgeon said he would call us when he wanted us. I still think there must be some mistake. Did you see the cook come home, Rebecca?”

“Oh, no,” said Rebecca, “I didn’t see nuthin’! And Susan said if I did, I was to keep my lips closed. She said her heart was just gone broke because her dear pets were going to school. She said ’twas a judgment for sending the children away.”

Mr. Chumleigh smiled faintly in spite of himself.

Mr. Markis came downstairs, followed by the two other men.

“There’s nothing on the roof, sir,” he said. “There’s no trace of any disturbance there.”

Mr. Chumleigh was more puzzled than ever. He did not speak.

“O Rebecca, I’m so sorry!” whispered Jack, —“I’m so sorry! It will break Susan’s heart.”

“I must get at the bottom of this,” said Mr. Chumleigh. “How did you know that the cook was dead?”

“Oh, I heard it!” said Rebecca. “Mr. Markis there done tell us.”

“*I!*” said Mr. Markis, in astonishment. “*I!* You must be dreaming, young lady. I never told anybody such a thing. You and Susan told me.”

“Golly!” said Rebecca, “I never said no such thing. I heard you tell Susan with your own lips. You just go and look on the roof of the summer kitchen, and you’ll see sights.”

Mr. Markis looked at Susan with pity in his eye.

“That young colored lady is crazy, Mr. Chumleigh,” he said. “I know no more about the death of Missus Cook than I know of geometry. I am sure that there is nothing remarkable on the roof of this house.”

“You’d better know what you are talking of before you call a respectable colored lady crazy,” retorted Rebecca. “Susan and me were talking about the five dark days in the kitchen when two corpses fell on the roof. Mr. Markis said one was the cook.”

The policeman opened his mouth, but Rebecca did not give him a chance to speak.

“It was like thunder falling on the roof. The noise was awful.”

Thomas Jefferson clutched Faky’s arm.

“O Faky,” he whispered, “we’re gone!”

Faky’s eyes sparkled.

“How did you feel about it, Rebecca? Was Susan frightened?”

“Frightened!” said Rebecca. “I should say so; her face, except her freckles, was as white as chalk. She just clung to me. ‘Susan,’ says I, ‘be carm!’ But she wouldn’t be carm nohow. And then we ran and ran,—I holding Susan from swounding just like a baby; and then we met Mr. Markis, and ——”

Faky Dillon could restrain himself no longer. He shook with laughter. The others—except Thomas Jefferson, whose face was distended by a broad grin,—looked at him, with fear tugging at their heart-strings.

“What do you mean, sir?” asked Mr. Chumleigh, losing patience. “Tell me at once what do you mean by this frivolous conduct? Speak, sir!”

“I don’t mean anything, sir,” replied Thomas Jefferson, looking frightened; “but Rebecca—” here his tendency to giggle was too much for him,—“but Rebec—Rebecca talks so funny!”

“Oh, you needn’t make so much fuss, Rebecca!” remonstrated Baby, in an injured tone. “I’m sure it didn’t hit *you*.”

“It!” cried Rebecca. “I reckon not,—there were two of them. I’d have just died if they touched me.”

The policeman appeared again, with the surgeon and the driver.

“Your servants have been frightened by nothing, Mr. Chumleigh. Everything in the house is

in good order. There is nothing whatever on the kitchen roof."

"I am sorry that you have had all this trouble, Doctor," Mr. Chumleigh replied, politely. Then he tipped the driver, and in a few minutes the ambulance was heard to drive away.

"We must get to the bottom of this," said Mr. Chumleigh, gravely. "I have reason to believe that these boys know more about the matter than they are willing to admit. Now, Jack, tell me what all this means."

Jack looked up at his father appealingly. His first impulse was to say: "I do not know, sir." A year ago he would have said this on a similar occasion, and regretted it afterward.

Baby Maguire went close to his elbow and whispered:

"Don't tell!"

Mr. Chumleigh quietly led the way into the parlor. Jack followed him. The rest remained in the hall, where the gas jet cast a greenish light on apprehensive faces. The knob of the door turned, and the boys started like guilty creatures. Susan entered the hall; she walked very slowly and spoke in a whisper:

"I suppose the worst has come to the worst. Mrs. Chumleigh sent me to find out. 'Tis a sad day for us all."

"Yes, the worst *has* come to the worst, Susan," said Bob. "You've got us into a nice scrape by

your foolishness. We've got to go to school now. Mr. Chumleigh is interviewing Jack in there. There is no escape now. I don't see why you need go to call ambulances and policemen and things, just because Miley's watermelon fell—" Bob checked himself; he would tell the truth, at all events—" was thrown on the roof of the kitchen."

"Bob Bently," said Susan, severely, "is this the example you're giving Rebecca and the boys? Is it lies and tricks I'm to be listening to, and my best friend gone like the grass of the field? Do you know what has happened? You're that hard-hearted that it's a wonder her spirit doesn't come back to haunt you."

The door that led into the hall from the back of the house suddenly opened, and in the dimly-lighted doorway, attired in a rustling silk gown and a *broché* shawl, with four red poppies piled above her forehead, in a purple velvet bonnet, stood the cook!

"It is like her to the life," whispered Susan. "Ah! I'll be after seeing visions of her till my dying day."

Rebecca uttered a shriek and covered her face with her apron. The boys, who thought the cook looked very angry, waited for her to speak.

"Is it you, Susan, and you, Rebecca," she began, "that I see playing the lady up here, and the kitchen full of disorder, and the house full of

the smell of apple-dumplings—and apples going up in price every day? Am I awake or do I dream? And the roast beef not even on the fire? And me finding the back door open and a strange dog with his head in the milk-can? Do I dream, I say?”

The voice sounded so familiar and earthly that Rebecca's face emerged from under her apron, and her eyes bulged out to their fullest extent as she listened. If this was really the cook, she had reason to fear; but if it were only her ghost, Susan, with her intimate acquaintance with apparitions, would know how to deal with her.

“It is of your soul you ought to be thinking, after what you've just come through,” Susan began. “Your place is in the grave, anyhow; and don't come bludgering about here and disturbing decent people.”

The cook leaned against the door-post for support. “If a spear had entered my breast,” she said afterward to Baby Maguire, “it couldn't have pierced the upper-crust of my heart more.”

“In my grave, ma'am!” repeated the cook. “And is it the likes of you that speaks to me thus,—and me not more than a year or two older than yourself, ma'am? 'Tis the way of the world. Well, children, I'll have to forget these insults and strive to get you some dinner, or your mother will be soon asking the reason why. As to you, Susan, I leave you to your conscience, and

I hope 'twill clear you. Come, Rebecca, don't be grinning like an ape."

Rebecca bounded forward, and went out behind the majestic figure of the cook.

"The cook is all right," said Faky. "She isn't a ghost, Susan. And you'd better go and help her. Mrs. Chumleigh will be home soon."

Susan turned to the boys with dignity.

"It is ingratitude I expect. 'Twas ingratitude I was made for. But I didn't expect *you* to turn against me. It is my belief that you're at the bottom of this mischief, and I hope you'll be well punished for it; for a more agglutinous and contriving set of boys I have never met. And it's well you are going to school, where I hope you'll learn to value the friends you've lost."

Susan flounced out of the hall, and left the boys to their thoughts. Bob Bently and Faky Dillon manfully stood their ground, although they were rather afraid of Mr. Chumleigh. Baby Maguire and Thomas Jefferson, full of anxiety about the apple-dumplings, followed Susan.

After a time Mr. Chumleigh and Jack came out of the parlor. Poor Jack's eyes looked somewhat red. Mr. Chumleigh had a severe air.

"This last performance has finally decided me," he said. "I had begun to think, owing to Mrs. Chumleigh's persuasions, that my boys would do quite as well at home as at Professor Grigg's

school. I am now convinced that they need more stringent discipline. I shall telegraph my final decision to the professor to-morrow. You go, Jack, by the evening train."

Bob Bently groaned.

"Your father will, I presume, follow my example. This performance, Master Bob, is the last straw ——"

Bob groaned again; and, in the weakness of woe, sat down suddenly on the China umbrella-stand recently sent over from Japan by Uncle Ferrier. It was not intended to bear such weight; and Bob fell, with a loud crash, among its fragments, just as Mrs. Chumleigh entered the hall.

"This is the last straw," observed Mr. Chumleigh, with a certain grimness,—“though I cannot say it has broken a camel's back.”

And then Mrs. Chumleigh had to listen to explanations from all sides.

IV.

THE LILIES.

THERE had been silence in the Chumleigh house all day. The boys had gone to Uncle Mike's, to say good-bye to Guy; and the usual sounds of conversation, growing louder when Rebecca let something fall, were not heard from the kitchen. Mrs. Chumleigh, busy with the boys' boxes, wondered at the unusual stillness. She began to fear that it forboded mischief, until she remembered that the boys had gone out.

The boys had feared that their visit to Guy might be prevented entirely, or that Jack might be sent off alone. But Mrs. Chumleigh, when the episode of the watermelon had been well explained to her, declared that Guy should not suffer because of it. Besides, the cook had taken the boys' side of the question. "If Susan chose to think that watermelon juice meant murder," she said, "it wasn't their fault." She hoped 'twould be a warning to Susan not to be filling her head with stories about banshees and ghosts.

It was a bright day in September. The lilies in the garden had just opened, and their ribbed

trumpets held golden dust and the most exquisite perfume. This garden at the side of the Chumleigh house was only a city yard, after all. It consisted of a red brick walk, on either side of which were large tangles of old-fashioned flowers. On one side, in the narrower strip, were bushes of chrysanthemums,—not the fashionable, monstrous chrysanthemums, but the smaller ones; and these were a reddish purple in October. In the spring, up from this narrower strip came the star of Bethlehem. And in June the fence on this side was covered with a running prairie rose, which was pretty but scentless. At the end of the yard there was an arbor covered with woodbine; and behind the quaint old hydrant—a pump had once stood there—a mass of Mexican vine, with bugle-shaped flowers.

In the wider bed, at the other side of the brick path—which Rebecca scrubbed every morning,—were lady's-slippers, clumps of the fragile ice-plant, patches of four-o'clocks, heliotrope, white and purple columbines, bits of verbena, a sweet-william or two, above which towered three dahlia stalks. Another arbor, over which climbed an Isabella grapevine, completed the garden; though there were bushes of sorrel and chickweed hidden in the shade of the greater things. But the glory of it all was the row of lilies against the fence. Their leaves were large, oval, and ribbed, and were beautiful in themselves,—much more beau-

tiful than the straight, upright spikes of the orange lily, which, much to Susan's disgust, always opened about the 12th of July.

Faky Dillon could never look at the lilies without a shudder. They reminded him of school. Their buds began to show about the middle of August. Then a gloom settled over Faky, which he shook off only at times. Each day, as the lilies grew and people admired them, Faky felt sadder and sadder. He did not hate the white lilies as Susan hated the orange lilies, but he wished that they could keep back their flowers until October, which, he thought, would be the proper month for the opening of school. There were no lilies in his father's yard, and he was glad of it; although it was annoying to have to dodge under the wet clothes on the lines when he was playing hand-ball. Nevertheless, the lilies in the Chumleigh yard had a strange attraction for Faky, and he visited them every day, only to sigh at the near approach of those melancholy days when he should be obliged to sit still from nine o'clock to twelve, and from two to four. The day had come at last when the lilies had done their worst. They were blooming in a row—a score of them,—and the air about them was so sick with perfume that, as Rebecca said, “A silver half dollar would not sink in it.”

Mrs. Chumleigh had given the boys permission to take some flowers to Guy, and Faky Dillon

had a cruel satisfaction in cutting at least fifteen lilies.

“You don’t know any better, of course,” he said to them, as he used the scissors; “but you’ll have to suffer for it, all the same. If you only had sense enough, you’d come out at some pleasanter time.”

Jack armed himself with the whole clump of white sweet-williams; and Thomas Jefferson used several yards of string in tying up an exceedingly stiff bouquet, including a little of everything, with a big yellow dahlia in the middle. He had intended to present the tadpole to Guy; but it had escaped or evaporated during the night, and he had, in the morning, found the bottle overturned and empty. He was glad that he had not promised him the tadpole; for the sudden disappearance of the precious creature would have been a sad disappointment to the little boy.

Bob Bently had brought a checker-board and some checkers, and Baby Maguire had provided himself with a pasteboard box of lemon taffy. And when the quintette entered the street car, anticipation had for the present made even Faky forget the gloom of the season.

The trip to Uncle Mike’s was a very pleasant one. Baby Maguire was as meek as a little cherub embowered with lilies; for Thomas Jefferson had transferred his fragrant burden to

him, in order to play jackstones with Skinny McMullen, who was carrying a bundle of washed clothes to a friend of his mother's. There were not many people in the car, so that the game went merrily on in one corner. Jack and Bob conversed seriously, as became two who had awakened to the realities of life. Faky munched an apple, and Baby sat quite still, smiling sweetly at two old ladies opposite.

The old ladies were dressed in black, and each carried a capacious reticule of the old-fashioned straw kind. Their talk was not unusually loud, but they had the general opinion that the street cars are the best possible places in the world for confidential conversation. Jack and Bob soon learned, in spite of themselves, that these ladies were sisters; and that their sister-in-law, named Sarah, was a bad-tempered person. They seldom went out, it seemed; but they were now on their way to Fairmount Park, to attend a family picnic. There were jelly rolls in the reticule and beef sandwiches, also quince tarts, and the old ladies hoped they would not be crushed.

"Look at Baby!" Jack whispered, in a tone of contempt. "Look at him! He is bound to have one of those jelly rolls. The little sneak!"

Bob looked, and frowned balefully at Baby, whose eyes, gleaming innocently behind the lilies, were fixed on the old ladies.

"What a nice little boy!" one of the old ladies

said, when she had finished a long recital of the strange doings of her sister-in-law.

“He is so sweet!” observed the other, smiling at Baby.

Faky Dillon could not stand this. It struck him at once that Baby ought not to have a monopoly of whatever might be bestowed by these amiable old ladies. He sat up very straight, and smiled sweetly in imitation of Baby. But while Baby’s smile was pathetic—as became a young person with nerves,—Faky’s was not so attractive.

“Dear me!” said the first old lady. “What a contrast that other boy is to the first! He grins like—oh, something dreadful! He has such an evil look! He quite makes me shudder.”

“Quite!” said the second old lady.

Bob Bently burst into a cruel laugh, in which Jack and Thomas Jefferson, who had been listening joined.

Faky’s face turned scarlet, and he made a lunge with his fist at Jack. A playful scrimmage followed, during which the old ladies looked on with horror.

“Come and sit near us, little boy,” said the first old lady, who had a kind face. “I wonder that you can endure those rude creatures.”

“How neat and clean he is! What a beautiful white collar!” said the second old lady, while the boys sat afar off and waited.

“I bet that fellow gets a jelly roll!” whispered Bob.

“Two!” said Jack, who had no doubt of Baby’s success.

“Where are you going?” asked the first old lady.

Baby raised his eyes modestly and looked over his lilies—“like a freckled Cupid on a valentine,” Faky thought.

“I am about to visit a crippled little boy,” he said, sweetly.

“How kind!” said the second old lady. “Quite like a bit out of a story-book. You must be hungry,—little boys are always hungry.” And the old lady, with a pleasant smile, unclasped her reticule.

“I am seldom hungry,” said Baby, in his most pathetic voice; “but sometimes in the morning I eat a little,—about this time. I have nerves, you know.”

The kind old lady opened her reticule, and the boys saw her draw carefully from it two quince tarts. A suppressed groan rent Faky Dillon’s breast. Baby dropped the lilies on the seat and looked pathetically expectant.

Just as the first old lady was about to bestow the tarts upon Baby her sister touched her arm warningly.

“The child is delicate,” she said. “You had better be careful. They might upset him for the

whole day.—No, little boy, you must not eat pastry until after dinner.”

Here the conductor suddenly called out “ Arch Street ! ” The old lady tried to put the tarts back into her reticule, and arose in a great flutter.

Jack jumped out, to help the old ladies from the platform. He had a very warm spot in his heart for all old ladies. The second old lady descended, with Jack’s help, and said :

“ Thank you ! ”

The first smiled, as he carefully aided her, and gave him the tarts.

“ Please relieve me of these, ” she said, kindly. “ Thank you ! You are a very polite boy. ”

Jack reëntered the car, much pleased by the praise he had received.

“ I tell you what I’ll do, ” he said, wrapping the tarts in his morning’s handkerchief, which he unfolded for the purpose. “ I’ll give these to little Guy. ”

Baby turned his face to his window, while remarks were made by Faky Dillon and Thomas Jefferson that made him feel like a martyr.

Nothing happened until they bade good-bye to Skinny McMullen by “ tagging ” him in succession ; during which violent amusement his bundle broke loose from its fastenings, and it required the aid of the conductor to put it together again.

“ Boys ! ” this much-tried person said, as our

friends disappeared around the corner. “*I call ’em hyenas!*”

Uncle Mike was in his shop when they arrived. His chin-whiskers were somewhat tinged with grey, and they were not so straggling as they had been. In fact, they now resembled a wreath of greyish flax that had fallen from his head, which was bald, and caught him under the chin. His face was ruddy and happy. His blue eyes twinkled when he saw the boys.

“We expected you!” he said, cordially, laying down the cleaver with which he was about to cut a slice of ham for a waiting little girl. “And it is glad I am to see you, young gentlemen. And it’s Guy that will be glad to see you. And it’s the wife herself will be delighted for to welcome you. Walk upstairs!”

“I like Uncle Mike,” said Faky, as they made their way up the narrow stairs. “He makes you feel like a man. He always takes it for granted that you want to do right.”

“That’s just my feeling,” said Thomas Jefferson.

Guy was ready to receive them. He stood up to welcome them, with a bright flush in his cheeks. Behind him stood Uncle Mike’s wife, looking as happy as possible. The room was beautified by all Jack’s gifts, and more besides. But Jack and Bob saw nothing except little Guy’s bright face.

V.

GUY AND HIS BEST FRIEND.

GUY had grown healthier in appearance, and the boys were delighted at the change. The little fellow grasped one arm of his chair and stood up to greet them, the flush of surprise still on his cheek. Jack stood in the middle of the floor, admiring Guy, who looked very happy.

Many changes had taken place in Guy's life of late,—not outward changes, but inward changes. In the old days he had been content if Aunt Mary, as he now called Uncle Mike's wife, came home safe to their little room. That was the happiness of his day. He had endured the long hours of loneliness in that hope,—the weekly visit to the church being the other epoch of his life.

Now that Uncle Mike took such good care of him and Aunt Mary, he had nobody to wait for, nobody to worry about. Besides, Aunt Mary had many interests outside of himself. He saw, with a pang, that she was as fond of Uncle Mike as she was of him. She had many visitors, too; and though she looked as carefully after Guy as if he were a baby, he felt the difference be-

tween this bustling housekeeper, with many cheerful cares, and the woman to whom he had been everything. When he had been simply Guy Pierre, the orphan cripple, she had treated him as one of her own; now that he had been found by his relative, the Count de Saint-Pierre, who wrote from some European city every month, he had been more comfortable. Then he was little Guy; now she called him Master Guy, and he did not like it half so well.

Enough money had been placed to Uncle Mike's account in the bank to give Guy every comfort. On Sunday a coach came from the livery-stable, and he drove to church. The children of the neighborhood had a fashion of gathering at the door and watching him descend. Some of them audibly wished that they were lame, so that they might drive in a fine carriage every day. As for Guy, he sighed for the old days.

"Oh! if I had only known that Mrs. McCrossin"—he sighed as he thought of that name—"would have lived and kept well, and that she'd have somebody to look after her,—if I did, I'd have stayed in those little rooms always."

But Guy never told all this to Aunt Mary,—he kept it to himself. He told it only to the three hundred paper soldiers which were his principal consolations in hours of solitude and depression. These soldiers were in the uniforms

of all nations. Guy cut them from the paper on which they were printed, and laid them in long rows on the bed. While Aunt Mary was down in the store—Uncle Mike's business had increased wonderfully since she had taken a hand in it,—Guy talked of his hopes and fears to the three hundred soldiers. He always put sixteen West Point cadets in the front row; for they seemed to understand him better than the others.

Another grief bore on the little boy's heart. He had recently discovered that he could not become an altar boy, and it made the kind Aunt Mary sad to see his wistful eyes fixed on the procession of little fellows who crossed the sanctuary, in the soft glow of candles, every Sunday at High Mass. He had long dreamed of being of their number; but one day, lately, he had heard a child on the sidewalk say, as he went into the church:

“He may be rich and drive in a carriage, but a cripple can't be an acolyte, anyhow.”

This thoughtless speech went like a dagger into Guy's heart. Aunt Mary heard him cry many times when he thought she was not near. He never told her the reason, but she guessed it.

Still, in spite of his sorrows—and they seemed great to Guy—he grew stronger every day. The rich milk, the wholesome food, the careful ventilation, the exact obedience to the doctor's orders,

were gradually improving his health. This gave many fears to the late Mrs. McCrossin.

“I’m glad to see the child’s face taking a touch of color,” she said to Uncle Mike. “But if he begins to get well, they’ll be taking him away from us.”

“The worst troubles,” said Uncle Mike, “are those that never happen.”

But his wife sighed, and watched Guy’s gradual improvement with some dissatisfaction. She loved Guy and wanted him to be happy, but she was jealous of his happiness anywhere away from herself.

She was very glad to see the boys, and she had made the proper preparations for making their last day of freedom as pleasant as possible. The flowers were placed in vases, the lilies having the honor of a huge white and gold pitcher; and cookies and milk were served as a slight repast before dinner. Guy was delighted with the gifts. Thomas Jefferson could not refrain from telling him about the tadpole; but Guy said that he thought tadpoles ought to be permitted to remain in their ponds until they became frogs. This amused Thomas Jefferson very much.

Faky Dillon and Guy played checkers. Baby Maguire took his place beside Aunt Mary, and began to tell everything he could remember since they last met,—making *himself* the hero of

all his stories. Jack and Bob Bently glared at him as they heard Aunt Mary's exclamations of wonder and sympathy. At last, unable to stand it any longer, they went down to the shop and helped Uncle Mike.

"After all," Jack said, as he wrapped up a pound of soap under Uncle Mike's direction, "work isn't harder than play."

"Not if you don't *have* to do it," said Bob. "If you could leave off work when you liked, and if you could do as you pleased, it wouldn't be bad. But suppose you wanted to go to a baseball match, and that you had to stay here selling mackerel all day,—I guess it wouldn't seem so much like play then."

"That is so," said Jack, with a sigh, as he thought of school. "A boy in this world is always having to do what he doesn't want to do."

Faky Dillon, Thomas Jefferson, and Baby Maguire came rattling downstairs at this moment, anxious to know what the other boys were doing. Jack seized the chance of having a quiet chat with Guy. He found the boy alone. Mrs. McCrossin—or rather Aunt Mary—was engaged in looking after the dinner. Guy had his face turned toward the window when Jack entered; he did not look at Jack. When he did show his face, Jack saw that there had been tears in his eyes.

“What is the matter, Guy?”

The boy did not answer at once. He picked up one of the paper soldiers and looked at it; then he laughed tremulously.

“The truth is, Jack,” he said, “I would like to talk to you, but I don’t know how to begin. I’m so used to talk to *these*,” he added, motioning toward the soldiers, “that I don’t know how to talk to anybody else. You know Aunt Mary doesn’t have as much time to give to me as she had long ago. Of course she is with me more, but she is interested in more things. I like Uncle Mike very much, of course; but, you see, he is always here in the evening, and I can’t talk before him: he seems like a stranger.”

Jack looked at Guy’s delicate face, and tried to think of something suitable to say.

“You are so comfortable here,” he said. “It’s so much better than the old place.”

“Oh, yes!” said Guy, wearily. “It’s warmer; there’s lots of good things to eat, and I can look out into the street and see the boys playing. That’s the worst of it.”

“Lots of those boys would like to be in your place, I’m sure,—to have nothing to do all day, and not to have to go away to school.”

“Do you think so?” asked Guy, lifting his eyes. “No, I don’t believe you think so. You say that because you pity me. Jack, I am tired of being pitied. Nobody likes to be pitied all the

time. If I could only do something that would make people forget to pity me, I should feel better."

Jack was silent. He thought steadily. Hitherto study had appeared to him as an unnecessary evil, like the measles or the scarlet fever. It had to be endured. Ancient history, for instance, and geography did not seem to be of any use. What was he to Pericles, or Pericles to him? And as he never expected to go to Africa, what real interest had whole chapters on that benighted country for him? From his point of view, most studies had been inflicted on him simply as an easy means devised by grown-up people for keeping him out of mischief.

Guy looked at him intently. Somehow or other, he trusted Jack more than anybody else. He seemed to know things. Uncle Mike and Aunt Mary were good, but they didn't seem to know things.

"Maybe if you studied something, people might be different," said Jack. "People seem to look up to other people who know whole books full."

"Do you think so, Jack?" asked Guy, eagerly. "What ought I to study?"

"The hardest thing, I suppose," said Jack, with a note of sadness in his voice; "and that's Ancient History. If you work hard, you'll learn all about the Persians, and the fellow that

poisoned himself because they wouldn't elect him to Congress; and Regulus,—he rolled down hill in a barrel full of spikes; and about the geese that were suckled by a she-wolf. No,—the geese cackled when Rome was burning, or something of that kind. At any rate, people look up to you if you know these things. You might try it."

Guy's eyes sparkled.

"Do you think that people would forget my lameness if I were very learned?"

"Oh, yes! Miss McBride said you—not *you*, but all of us—might be as ugly as sin; but if you could converse agreeably on subjects of contemporaneous interest, you were all hunkey dory. If you know all about Romulus and Remus when you go into society, you can do what you please."

"But I am not like other boys," said Guy, wistfully. "I might not be able to learn. O Jack, think of it,—I can never be an altar boy!"

"Do you really want to be an altar boy?" asked Jack. "I was one, but I dropped the book, and I was turned off. The sacristan said I was too clumsy."

"And you don't mind?" asked Guy, in amazement. "Aren't you sorry?"

"So many things happen to a boy," said Jack, "that you don't have time to be sorry for anything. I'm sorry I have to go to school."

“Oh, I wish *I* could go!” said Guy. “I’d feel like other boys then. Why, your Ancient History seems to me to be as amusing as a story-book.”

“Try it!” said Jack, with a sigh.

“I’d like to play hockey and baseball and football, and to skate and swim, and to study *hard*; and then to grow up and know *everything*. If I had somebody to pity or to take care of,” said Guy, tears coming into his eyes, “maybe I wouldn’t feel so bad. But everybody pities me.”

Jack was puzzled. Guy looked less delicate than when he lived in the old rooms at the back of the Chumleigh house. His eyes were brighter, his skin clearer. It was evident to Jack’s experienced eyes that he had no muscle; but his legs looked plumper, and his left leg was not so much twisted as formerly.

“Guy,” he said, timidly, “I don’t see why you shouldn’t get well. Why don’t you pray to get well? You’re always praying for things.”

“I didn’t think God wanted me to be well,” said Guy, thoughtfully.

“You’re looking better. Try praying, and don’t worry.”

Guy’s eyes brightened, and he almost laughed. “Jack,” he answered, “you’re the best friend I ever had.”

VI.

A TALK.

AFTER dinner, which was on a colossal scale, and during which Baby Maguire endeavored to excel his friends in "table manners," Guy and Faky and Jack made a group near the window and exchanged confidences, while Thomas Jefferson was so delighted with Uncle Mike's business that he went downstairs to assist him.

Baby Maguire went into a corner to indulge in his favorite occupation of "sulking." He had been laughed at, and this was the one thing that Baby could not endure. During the dinner, the boys had behaved in a manner which would have pleased the cook, though their mother might have found it rather oppressive. They sat bolt-upright; they passed every plate sent to them by Uncle Mike until it reached him again. Nobody would take anything to eat until he had been asked three times. Aunt Mary—it is very hard to keep from calling her Mrs. McCrossin—was delighted. Uncle Mike, after he had cordially said, "Don't be bashful," found the proceedings strangely ceremonious.

But Baby Maguire longed to do something that

would set him above the rest. And so when the fried chickens were brought to the table—Aunt Mary had thoughtfully provided a drumstick for each boy,—and the guests took the legs of the fowls very elegantly in their right hands, wrapping the end of the bone carefully with their napkins, and proceeded to eat, with the consciousness of having done more than their duty, Uncle Mike was much impressed. The drumstick of a fowl carved on the plate would have been a delusion to his guests, and he knew it. It would have been like an orange given to a boy with a command that he should not suck it; or like an apple presented with the understanding that it must be peeled. Baby, in order to distinguish himself, had slowly taken his handkerchief from his pocket and wrapped it about the end of the drumstick. He looked around him with an air of conscious virtue, and remarked:

“*I never soil my napkin.*”

Faky Dillon forgot his good manners and laughed; even Guy joined in the laughter in spite of himself. Aunt Mary, however, was offended.

“I am not so careful of my napkins, dear,” she said. “I want them to be used. There’s plenty where they came from.”

At this the boys laughed again—all except Guy, who would have consoled Baby Maguire if he could. But when Baby went into a corner and

refused to return to the table, Aunt Mary said that the best cure for sulks was "let alone."

Uncle Mike complimented the boys on their manners; although Faky had forgotten them for a moment, and tried to bite a large crescent from his piece of lemon pie. Fortunately, Jack jogged his elbow in time; and he dropped the pie to his plate, his eyes flashing fire.

"What are you punching me for?" he demanded, in a whisper. He realized his position in a moment, and took to his fork.

"Yes," Thomas Jefferson said, modestly, in answer to Uncle Mike's compliments, "we are taught—I mean teached—no, taught—a great many things. Mother scolds us often about our manners, and cook tells us things. Cook was born in one of the best families in Ireland, and she lived three weeks in Boston; she knows things, and she keeps us up to the mark, you bet—I mean you may presume. When Rebecca came to us first, the cook took a great deal of trouble with her. Rebecca used to say 'Laws-a-mussy!' in such a funny way. Cook wouldn't hear of it; she said it was almost like swearing, and she made Rebecca say 'Law sakes!'"

"The cook," said Aunt Mary, "is a knowledgeable woman. Now, boys, amuse yourselves while I clean off the table."

Guy had so disposed the flowers in his window that they made almost a bower.

“You can’t be lonely while you have flowers around you,” said Guy. “They seem to me as if they could speak. Our priest told me the other day that he was glad I love flowers. He said that St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi wrote that God especially loves those who love flowers.”

“They are pretty,” said Faky; “but you can’t get much fun out of them. I like things you can use. You ought to see the whistle made by the boy that lives out near the Park. He cut it out of a maple twig. I wonder if Professor Grigg’s school is in much of a country place? It’s awful to have to go away; but I guess there’ll be some fun. I’ve read lots of books about boarding-school, and the boys have great times. They put thistles and flour into other fellows’ beds.”

Guy shuddered.

“It must be awful!”

“No: it’s fun,” said Faky.

“But suppose they put thistles and flour into *your* bed?”

“That’s different,” said Faky, promptly. “And, then, you toss boys in blankets until you almost *squash* them against the ceiling. It’s great!”

“That was in ‘Tom Brown,’” said Jack; “but I don’t think they have so much fun at our American schools. Or if they do, they have to pay for it. There’s a fellow that was out at Notre Dame. He wrote to me all about the fun he had ‘skiving,’ as they call it there. He got

down the fire-escape, or some way, and went to town. It was great fun. He was up to his knees in mud; and it was dark and rainy when he got there, and he caught cold. But when he went back and tried to sneak in, the prefect nabbed him, and he was sent home. And his father went on awful."

"That wasn't very funny," said Guy.

"No; but I think Professor Grigg will not be quite so strict. You can fool him. I am going to lead him a pretty dance,—I am!" said Faky, with a chuckle.

"You'll make a mistake, then," said Jack, gravely. "Boys have enough trouble in this world without making more for themselves. Professor Grigg may make our life a burden, if he wants to," he added, with a sigh; "and he may think we're naturally bad, as most grown-up people do. If he does, I will not play tricks,—I'll just run away."

"And be sent back," said Faky.

"Then I'll go to sea," said Jack.

"I guess you've never read 'Two Years before the Mast,' or you wouldn't say that," said Faky. "You'd better stay at school than run away to sea. The sea ain't what it used to be. A fellow could stand some hardships in the olden time for the sake of popping into a pirate or two. But pirates are scarce now."

"A boy must learn to stand things," Guy

said. "This talk about running away is silly, I think. If I had the use of my legs, I'd stand *anything*,—yes, I would. You don't know how hard it is to hear you boys talk about sports and fun, and to feel that I must always be apart from you. It's worse than being a girl," added Guy, bitterly.

"Oh, no! don't say that!" said Faky. "Girls have to sew and knit and play the piano, and wear combs in their hair, and have clean hands all the time."

"I can't even help Uncle Mike," continued Guy, with tears in his eyes. "I feel better than I did; but I'd almost rather be a girl than a lame boy, because I could wash dishes and help Aunt Mary to cook. I don't mind being lame, but I hate to be different from other boys."

Aunt Mary, who was approaching with a large, bright basin, in which Guy always washed his hands after dinner, heard these words. They came upon her with the force of a shock. He had always seemed like a baby to her. That he should want to leave her was very terrible.

Guy saw by the expression of her face what troubled her.

"Aunt Mary," he said, "I want to go to school, that I may be a man some day. You know, a man's only half a man without education."

"I know it, child," Aunt Mary said, quietly; "and Uncle Mike and I are doing the best we

can for you. Sure, it's little we've been able to teach you, but I think we kept the good in you."

"O Aunt Mary!" said Guy, tears coming into his eyes, "I never can thank you enough,—I never can love you enough. I want to be a man, so that I can help you and Uncle Mike; to be like other men when I grow up; to be like other boys now. And I'll be so lonely when the boys go away!"

"We'll write to you every week," said Jack; "and Faky will write in poetry."

Guy's face brightened a little.

"But when I hear of your skating and football, I'll be so wretched."

"No, you won't," said Faky, consolingly; "because we'll be more wretched than you are. We'll put in only the bad things that happen to us. And if old Grigg is grumpy and jumps on us, we'll tell you every time; and then you'll say: 'How glad I am that I can stay at home in this cozy room!' Won't we, Jack?"

"Of course," said Jack, brightening. "I'm almost glad we're going to such a place, because it will make you feel glad to hear how old Grigg ill-treats us. Every time he puts me in jug I'll be gay, because I'll think how delighted dear old Guy will be when he hears it. I'm sure old Grigg's school is a terrible place."

"A regular den," said Faky, zealously, as Bob Bently entered from below, where he had been

engaged in helping Uncle Mike. "It's the kind of school where you have to break the ice in your basin every morning before you can wash yourself."

A groan came from Baby Maguire, who had forgotten his sulkiness in the interest of the conversation.

Bob chimed in :

"Sole leather for breakfast, and no sugar in the coffee, and hash every day."

Another and a louder groan came from Baby Maguire.

"Oh, yes, we'll have to stand it!" continued Bob, cheerfully. "I can stand hash every day, but it will be hard to live on cabbage and pickled pigs' feet most the year."

Guy shook his head.

"When I was littler," he said, "I didn't care whether I was like other boys or not. People seemed to think that I'd go to heaven soon. But I'm stronger now ; and, as the chance of going to heaven is not so near, I must try to live. And if I *have* to live, I want to be like you and the other boys. You don't know how hard it is to be pitied by people, who look at you and pity you, and then forget you. I don't want to be great, or a hero, or anything else," Guy exclaimed, his cheeks flushing ; "but I want to help Uncle Mike. If I can't help him, I'd like to go to school with you."

Jack sighed, as he heard this. It was strange, indeed, that any human being should want to go to school.

“When you boys talk of football and skating, and having fun, and swimming, I just feel empty here,” Guy continued. “It’s a feeling as if I were left out, you know.”

“I know,” said Bob, as he remembered a certain party. “I know, Guy; and it’s awful. You feel as if you hadn’t a friend in the world.”

“I have been praying that I could go to school with you,” said Guy.

“You might have heard a pin drop,” Bob Bently said afterward. It was plain to the boys that poor little Guy had gone crazy.

Before any of them had time to answer Guy’s astonishing announcement, Thomas Jefferson entered with a yellow envelope containing a telegraphic message.

VII.

THE DEPARTURE.

UNCLE MIKE'S name was on the yellow envelope; but he, being busy, had sent it upstairs to his wife. She put on her spectacles before she opened it. A telegram to Aunt Mary meant, in her opinion, something terrible. It was true that she had neither relative nor friend outside of the small circle we already know; but, nevertheless, a yellow envelope seemed always to contain bad news.

"Read it. I can't!" Aunt Mary said, giving the telegram to Jack.

Jack tore it open and read:

"Doctor writes that Guy is improving. Let him go to Professor Grigg's school as soon as possible. Put him under care of Abbé Mirard.

"G. DE SAINT-PIERRE."

The telegram had been sent from Paris. Aunt Mary read it herself.

"Well," she said, with a sigh, "I suppose there is no help for it. But I'll not send the child, in spite of all the Saint-Pierres in the world, if it is not a Catholic school."

“Oh, but it is!” said Baby Maguire. “I know all about that. I was hoping that it wasn’t; so that I wouldn’t have to go to confession, except when I came home for vacation. But Aunt Chumleigh told me different. Father Mirard teaches catechism, and it’s an awfully religious school.”

Baby had spoken very frankly; and Aunt Mary was shocked, because she had always believed that he was a very pious little boy.

“Oh, yes,” Jack chimed in, “it’s all right that way! Father and mother wouldn’t let us go if it wasn’t.”

“Dear! dear!” said Aunt Mary, tears coming into her eyes. “The house will be so lonely! And I hope they’ll see that Guy’s flannels are regularly changed. Will you, Jack, promise to see that he has his red on in December, January, and February, and his white in April?”

“All right!” said Jack.

“And I’ll put his medicine chest in your care. No matter what the doctor at the school may say, he’s to have his little pills regular, Jack.”

“All right!” said Jack, recklessly.

“Am I really to go?” Guy asked, his cheeks growing paler. “Really?”

“I am afraid so,” answered Aunt Mary. “Your clothes are all ready. I’ll have to get you some new handkerchiefs, though. I suppose that Mrs. Grigg will go mousing about among

your things and making remarks. I think I'll have to get you some new stockings; for I am not going to have any schoolmistress going about and saying that I sent you away with darned stockings."

"Why, we've all got darned stockings!" said Bob. "Nobody minds *that*."

Aunt Mary kissed Guy and hastily left the room. She went half-way down the stairs, and sat on the step there and cried.

Coming up, Uncle Mike found her there. In a low voice she told him of the cable message.

"'Tis hard to part with the child," Uncle Mike said. "Faith, he's been an angel in the house. But it's better that he should go away and get strong than die, isn't it? The reason his relative left him with us was that he expected him to die, and this was his only home. As it is, Mary, the poor boy will have to be educated like a gentleman, and neither you nor me is fitted to do that."

Aunt Mary sighed.

"He'll come back strong and hearty," continued Uncle Mike.

Aunt Mary shook her head.

"But I won't have the care of him: 'twill be that Mrs. Grigg that will have done it all."

"What difference," said Uncle Mike, cheerfully, "when he comes home rosy and light-hearted, and maybe able to walk?"

“He’ll be such a fine gentleman that he’ll be ashamed of us.”

“Not he,” said Uncle Mike. “There’s not a mean drop in him. I’m sure that, in spite of his geometry and geography, he’ll be just as ready to sell mackerel with me in the shop as the boys there beyant. Come up and see the boy, Mary. Don’t be moping here. We’ll make him go away with a cheerful heart; for life’s sad enough as it is.”

Aunt Mary was divided between conflicting emotions. Of course she was glad that Guy had a good chance of living,—and he must have if the doctor said so. She would have preferred that *her* doctor had said so; for she believed in homeopathy, and always carried little pills with her, in case of emergency. But, still, she held that this doctor knew something, since Mr. Chumleigh had sent him. She was already jealous of the unknown Mrs. Grigg; and, then, she felt a deep pang at the loss of the little cripple. Yet it must be admitted that she did not love him so much, now that he was stronger, as when he was weak and helpless. She loved him deeply, of course; but she loved the other little Guy, wan and hollow-eyed, more.

At the same time she was a sensible woman. She saw, with Uncle Mike, that Guy must have his chance; and she went busily to work to help to give it to him. Being a religious woman, duty

was duty. It was her duty to do what the Count de Saint-Pierre asked her to do; it was her duty to make Guy's going away as cheerful as possible.

The boys all crowded upstairs when they heard that Guy was going to school. He sat by the window, in his bower of lilies, with flushed cheeks and bright eyes, listening to the chatter about him. To the lonely boy all this gleeful noise was delightful.

"Aunt Mary," he said, "I will think of you every single day, and write to you every week."

"See that you do," replied Aunt Mary, turning her head away, to examine an array of shirt waists she had before her. "It will not be long till June, Guy," she added, remembering Uncle Mike's speech about cheerfulness; "then we'll all be happy together."

Guy's face brightened.

"You'll not miss me much, Aunt Mary," he went on. "You have Uncle Mike. And we'll all be so happy in June! And I will know so much then!"

"Yes."

Aunt Mary turned away again, and a tear trembled on one of the shirt waists.

Guy's excitement grew as the day wore on. He was to travel; he was to eat in the dining-car, and perhaps sleep all night on wheels! The boys, forgetting their own fears for the future,

began to describe the delights of a journey by rail.

“I was to Chicago twice,” said Bob Bently; “and I know something about traveling.”

There was silence. Jack had been to New York once and to Atlantic City three times. Baby Maguire had traveled from Kennett Square. Thomas Jefferson had made the Atlantic City trip. And Faky Dillon had gone as far as Trenton; but, as he had a vivid imagination, it seemed when he talked as if he had gone around the world.

“When will Guy go?” Bob asked. “He can’t go with us; for we’re all ready to start to-night, and traveling in a sleeper might not be good for him.”

“He’ll go to-morrow or next day,” said Aunt Mary. “And Uncle Mike will go with him. I’ve crossed the ocean once, and there’ll be no more traveling for me till I’m carried to the grave.”

“It would be nice if we could wait for him,” said Baby Maguire.

“Oh, but we can’t!” answered Thomas Jefferson, promptly.

“No, we can’t,” said Bob, with a long-drawn sigh. “If Guy travels in the daytime, I can tell him how he can save money. The last time I went to Chicago in the summer with father, he gave me three dollars and a half. That was

enough for three meals, and I had to have something for the porter. They charge a dollar for each meal in the dining-car, you know."

Aunt Mary stopped in the process of threading her needle.

"Is it telling the truth you are?"

"I'll cross my breath," replied Bob, promptly.

"A dollar for breakfast! The deceiving villains!" said Aunt Mary, with intense indignation.

"Yes, ma'am," answered Bob.

Guy was all attention. In time this strange, new world might be all his own.

"Go on, Bob!" he said.

"I just made up my mind that I'd save my money. So I gave the porter ten cents in advance; and when father went into the dining-car I said: 'Oh, no,—they don't catch *me*! Oh, no!' I had coffee and pork and beans at a station for twenty cents. That left me three dollars and twenty cents. See?"

Aunt Mary looked at Bob approvingly; she liked thrift.

"You'll be a great man yet," she said.

"When noontime came," Bob went on, amid silence broken only by a chuckle from Faky Dillon, "I dropped off (it was later than noon: about one o'clock), and got a cup of coffee and a piece of pie,—fifteen cents. That left me three dollars and five cents. See?"

Aunt Mary was delighted.

"'Tis riding in your own carriage you'll be yet."

"Well, didn't I serve the dining-car people right?" asked Bob.

"You did! you did!" said Aunt Mary.

Faky Dillon chuckled. Bob's cheeks reddened, and he threw threatening glances at him; but Faky still chuckled.

"And tell Aunt Mary how much money you took home," he said.

"I'm sure you did well," she said; "and your father must have been pleased with you. I'll tell Uncle Mike—'twill be a lesson to him,—and 'tis the biggest apple in the shop he'll give you."

Faky broke out into laughter.

"Tell the rest of the story, Bob. I heard your father tell my father all about it."

"Ah! you hold your tongue!" whispered Bob. "I'll punch——"

"It was after they left Buffalo," Faky broke in, "that Bob began to feel really hungry. He tried chewing-gum, but his father made him throw twenty cents' worth of Tutti Frutti out the car window."

Thomas Jefferson groaned.

"Who picked it up, Faky?" asked Baby Maguire.

"A goat, of course. Chewing-gum and tomato cans together is what goats like," said Faky, rapidly. "Then he got hungrier and hungrier."

“You stop, Faky!” growled Bob.

“He bought two boxes of caramels, three boxes of figs, *Puck*—just to take his mind from his stomach,—a lot of apples and pears, two papers of lemon drops, a glass pistol full of candy, some salted popcorn, four oranges——”

“Three!” said Bob, frowning.

“Three oranges, half-a-dozen bananas, and three more boxes of caramels. Then he had a dollar left. See?”

Aunt Mary raised her eyes and looked severely at Bob. Guy was shocked at such extravagance.

“Anyhow, you saved a dollar.”

“I had a dollar and fifteen cents left,” growled Bob. “You stop, Faky Dillon!”

“And then, when they got past Cleveland, there was a wreck ahead, and they had to wait a while; so Bob went over to an apple orchard——”

“The farmer said we might help ourselves, if each gave him ten cents.”

“And Bob”—Faky went into a series of loud chuckles, in which everybody, except Aunt Mary and Bob, joined from mere sympathy,—“and Bob climbed a knotty tree. And the whistle blew before he expected; for his father says he was so hungry that he sat on a bough eating apples and couldn’t wait till he got down. And Bob tried to slide down, but his trousers caught in the knobs on the tree. And he ran, caught

the train, and the porter had to take him into the stateroom, to sew him up. He was all in rags. And the porter charged him a dollar."

"The deceiving wretch! the deluder!" said Aunt Mary. "A dollar for putting a few stitches in a boy's trousers!"

"But I *was* all torn up," said Bob, gloomily; "and it was worth a dollar: he sewed for two hours."

"I'll wager," she said, contemptuously, "that he hadn't even a thimble on, and him charging a dollar! Some of them colored people do beat the Dutch!"

"I'll settle *you*!" Bob whispered to Faky, who merely murmured:

"He thought he could travel all day,
So he saved up his pence,
And called it immense.
But, for all, his hard cash got away!"

The argument was closed by Uncle Mike's announcement that the time was up: the boys must go.

Two hours later Mr. and Mrs. Chumleigh, with the Dillons and Bentlys, stood at the gate of the Pennsylvania Railroad station. The boys had gone.

"Well," said Mrs. Chumleigh, "it almost breaks my heart; but those boys of ours will be out of the kitchen, anyhow."

“It’s a mercy,” said the cook, aloud, to herself, as she watched the clock, “that they’re off. It’s meself that finds it hard to associate with idjuts and sows’ ears that you can’t make silk purses of.”

Susan bowed her head; and Rebecca, afrighted, exclaimed:

“Laws-a-mussy!”

“And me doing me best to teach them,” added the cook, bitterly, to the clock,—“And me doing me best! Well, ’tis said that a man never makes any profit in his own country. But those angels are gone; and I hope their high-flown education won’t make ’em bad and bold, like some of their elders,—I name no names,” she added.

VIII.

THEY ARRIVE.

THE boys were accompanied by Mr. Dillon, who had his berth made up, and who went to bed at once. The porter was inclined to look with doubt on the mysterious packages which were the property of the boys, whose berths were all lower ones at the end of the car opposite to Mr. Dillon's. Mr. Dillon was an amiable, "easy-going" man, who believed in giving boys enough to eat, and then letting them alone.

The cook had supplied each of her friends with a large package; and other friends had not been backward in helping to provide them with defences against hunger, should they be attacked during the night. The porter's language had been so rude, as he passed them and looked at their bundles, that Baby Maguire and Faky Dillon had hastened to put the more perishable articles in the lower berth.

"We can double up, you know," Faky said to Thomas Jefferson; "and that will leave a berth vacant."

"How?" asked Thomas Jefferson.

"Why, you see, father took a berth for me,

and there's a berth for Baby and a berth for Bob Bently; but Jack and you were to stay together. Now, we can put the pies and things in Bob's berth, and he and I can take the upper berth. That will leave one vacant,—don't you see? And when everybody is asleep, we can all get up and have a jolly picnic.

“If the pangs of hunger should come,”

added Faky dropping into poetry,

“We'll soon be tight as a drum.”

Faky's ingenuity was much admired by all the boys.

The car was without passengers as yet; though the porter said he expected that a large number of people would come on at Germantown, as there had been a meeting of Quakers there; and this was an extra car, nearly all reserved. Five custard pies, a large jelly cake, and a bag of cream puffs were laid lovingly under the coverlet in the lower berth. Faky thought it best to take off the wrappers and hide them in this manner; for the porter seemed to be a very inquisitive fellow.

When he came around again, he noticed that the greasy-looking bundles had disappeared. The crumbs of cookies adorned Baby Maguire's chin.

“Eat all the stuff you had?” the porter asked, smiling. “That’s right! Glad to get that sort of stuff out of the way. It soils my car.”

The boys were not sad at all. When the train started, even Baby Maguire had a momentary pang of homesickness. But the novelty of traveling, even in a hot and stuffy sleeping-car, was pleasant. And, then, there was the prospect of the midnight orgy.

At Germantown a group of Quakers and Quakeresses entered. The boys were all fond of the dove-colored garb, associated in their minds with ways of contentment and pleasantness. Baby Maguire’s grand-aunt was a Quakeress, and she lived at Kennett Square; and when she came to town she was exceedingly amiable to all his “crowd.”

The boys hastened at once to make themselves useful.

“Thank thee,” said a cheerful-looking old Quaker woman, whose boxes and bags Faky helped to arrange so that they would not fall when the car moved. “Thee is a good boy. Thee has been well brought up,—I can see that. Thee will live a godly life when thee grows up.”

“Kind of,” said Faky, not meaning to be irreverent,—“I hope. I mean to be a kind of good man.”

“Thee talks well,” said the old lady in the big dove-colored bonnet. “What will thee be when

thee grows up?" And she gave him a handful of cardamom seeds.

"I used to think that I should like to be a pirate," Faky said; "there is nothing in the examination of conscience against it. But people don't seem to look on it as a respectable business. I should, of course, kill only pagans and other pirates. I shouldn't want to do anything that would not be quite right. But since I am to be educated up to the top notch, I rather think I'll be a circus rider or a poet. If you're a circus rider, you have to know enough to write out the big posters. You have to punctuate, you know; and to be able to drop into poetry now and then would be a help. Don't you think so?"

The old lady cast an almost terrified look at Faky.

"Thee must banish such temptations," she said. "Thee must strive hard against circus riding; and I do not know of any poet, except Milton, who was quite respectable. Thee has heard of Milton?"

"Oh, yes!" Faky said. "Miss McBride read bits of his. There wasn't much in them. No snap. They wouldn't do on circus posters."

The old gentlewoman sighed and shook her head. Having tucked her luggage in its place again, Faky made his best bow—his heart always went out to old ladies,—and joined the other boys, who were in the small apartment devoted

to smokers. They did not smoke. They had given their word of honor that there should be no smoking of cigarettes while at school, and that was enough. With all their faults, these boys looked on the breaking of such a promise as an impossibility.

“It would be nice to have a cigarette now,” said Bob Bently. “A fellow would feel so manly.”

“You wouldn’t feel very manly when you remembered that you’d broken a promise to your father,” replied Thomas Jefferson. “I wouldn’t mind having one myself just now. And if father and mother were always sneaking and looking at me on the sly, I’d smoke,—I believe I would; but when they just take your word for it, you’re gone!”

“Smoking is bad,” said Jack. “Look at Skinny McMullen. He smokes twenty cigarettes a day, and he inhales the smoke, and he’s just copper-colored. His mother has a cousin who is a Congressman, and he intended to send Skinny to West Point. But the doctor says Skinny will never pass the physical examination; he has carbuncles on his lungs already. He can’t play football, you know;—he has no wind. When I see Skinny getting yellower every day, I’m glad I promised. There is no use in smoking cigarettes if you don’t inhale, and that kills you.”

“Well, we promised, anyhow; and that settles

it," said Bob, with a sigh. "O Jack, I don't really know how I shall stand it at school! When I think of all our family about the table to-night and only me away,—it's hard."

"And father and mother wishing we were back!" said Thomas Jefferson. "And the cook and Susan! And Miss McBride holding us up as shining examples to the boys that didn't know us!"

"It's hard!" said Faky. "I didn't feel it so much when everybody was shaking hands and kissing us, and telling us not to tear our clothes, and to get a hundred in arithmetic and geography, and to remember our advantages."

"I shall have to go home," said Baby.

Faky sniffled; Thomas Jefferson screwed up his face, to prevent two large tears from rolling down his cheeks,—but they rolled down in spite of his efforts. Jack and Bob looked gloomily out the window into the darkness.

After a long silence, Jack proposed that they should go to bed, and suggested that he should awaken everybody in two hours. A little sleep would be refreshing and exhilarating for the feast.

In rather a melancholy mood, the boys said their prayers and took possession of the berths. Faky and Bob Bently climbed to the one over the board of delicacies—in this case, probably best expressed by the German word *delikatessen*,—and Baby Maguire had the lower berth oppo-

site. There was a moment of horrible suspense when the porter poked his head into lower berth 14 and drew it out again. As the *delikatessen* were under the blanket, he concluded, of course, that the berth was empty.

“Why don’t you stay in your own berth?” he asked of Faky Dillon, who was watching him from the parting in the curtains above.

“We want to talk,” said Faky.

As soon as the porter had gone, they felt that the worst was over. The boys did not undress. They were not sure whether it was the custom on this particular railway or not; and, besides, they wanted to be ready to arise the instant Jack gave the signal.

Jack awoke with a hazy impression that he had heard somebody say “Harrisburg!” a long time ago. There was a great bustle near him, and the end of a bag carried through the car pumped his elbow.

“Grigg! Grigg!—that is the name, porter. I am astounded that there is no berth reserved for me. The station-master at Harrisburg said he’d telegraph.”

“Lower berths all filled, sah,” said the porter. “Perhaps he got you a berth on another car. This one is a special, put on for the Quaker meeting. I can give you No. 14,—there is nobody in it. The boy that has it has gone above with his friend. Will that do?”

“Admirably!” said the soft, round voice. “Here are my tickets. I get off at Greenlawn. Give me plenty of time to dress.”

Jack, Thomas Jefferson, Bob Bently, Faky and Baby Maguire, who were wide awake now and peering through the curtains, saw a piece of silver change hands.

The porter went away, and the tall figure of the man named Grigg sat on the side of the berth and began to undress. His collar and cuffs clicked against the woodwork as he threw them on the brackets in the berth. That click seemed like a note of doom to the boys. They said nothing; even Faky’s ingenuity was paralyzed. Thomas Jefferson could only say, in a hollow whisper:

“Maybe it is Professor Grigg.”

As the Grigg legs, which had hitherto protruded from between the curtains, were drawn inward, Thomas Jefferson moaned:

“Why doesn’t somebody tell him?”

But a simultaneous chuckle burst from the three berths when a muffled sound—described by Faky as “squashing”—was heard from berth No. 14, followed by low and discontented murmurs. The berths shook with suppressed laughter.

“If somebody doesn’t do something, he’ll find us out,” whispered Jack.

The curtains of Baby Maguire’s berth opened, and out stepped Baby. He looked very inno-

cent; though his big white collar, in which he had slept, was somewhat creased.

“Are you sick, sir?” asked Baby, sweetly. “I thought I heard you groan.”

“*Sick!*” said the muffled voice. “No, but I have fallen into some very slimy and unpleasant substances. Something is the matter with the electric bell here. Will you please call the porter?”

“He’s asleep,” said Baby, promptly. “I hope that thoughtless boy didn’t leave his alligators in that berth.”

“What boy? What alligators?” cried the voice within. And Mr. Grigg emerged very suddenly from the interior.

“There was a boy who had a lot of alligators he was bringing from New Orleans—but, oh! I see: you’ve been sleeping among the pies, which some foolish boys put in that berth. I saw them do it. Just you go to the washroom; and you can take my berth, just opposite. I’ll look after the pies. It won’t hurt you: it’s only custard pie.”

“My name is Mr. Grigg, of Colonnade House,” said Professor Grigg; “and I am much obliged to you. I shall lecture in Greenlawn to-night on ‘The Language of the Accadians and the Scythians.’ I will take the opposite berth, after I have washed. I will ascertain the names of these foolish and wicked boys from the conductor, and re-

port them to the proper authorities. What is your name?"

"Maguire," said Baby, sweetly. "I will put your things into the opposite berth, while you wash. I'll easily find half a berth with a friend."

"You are a good little boy," said Professor Grigg, warmly. "And I will leave with the porter tickets for yourself and your friend for my lecture to-morrow."

In a short time after this Professor Grigg was sound asleep in Baby's berth, while the boys were very busy trying to get rid of the damaged pies, which were finally thrown from the window of the smoking-car.

About seven o'clock in the morning the porter suddenly awakened them.

"Coming to Colonnade Station," he said.

Mr. Dillon was waiting for them. The porter gave him two tickets for "Master Maguire." They were green and they announced that Professor Grigg would "lecture on 'The Language of the Accadians and the Scythians,' at eight o'clock P. M., in the Academy of Music at Greenlawn. Admit two."

"Baby is in luck and we are not," said Jack, gloomily.

"Colonnade Station!" called out the conductor. They had arrived.

IX.

PROPHECIES.

A CARRIAGE was waiting at the railroad station,—a very queer carriage, with flapping canvas sides and a lopsided air. Just then it was liberally sprinkled with dried mud.

“For Colonnade House?” the driver asked. He was a colored man, who showed his teeth and looked good-natured.

The boys were glad to get out of the warm air of the car, and the novelty of the landscape interested them. It was flat,—not a hill was to be seen anywhere. On each side of the road were fields of dried cornstalks, among which great yellow pumpkins glowed. The wind blew fresh and cool; and as the boys jumped into the carriage they all felt for a moment as if life, even at school, might be a very good thing.

But this did not last long. The unfamiliarity of the landscape brought to Jack a sense of desolation. The pumpkins gave the fields an air of savagery which he did not like. Pumpkins in front of green-grocers' shops were familiar sights to him, but pumpkins sprawling about among yellow corn seemed barbaric and out of place.

Jack thought of the sunlight on the red bricks of the houses of his beloved city, and sighed. About this time the house at home was very bright, and the scent of coffee permeated it; and Jack felt sad as he thought of it. As he looked back, even his struggle with Ancient History and his hardships at Miss McBride's school seemed rosy and pleasant. Jack was not fond of the country; he knew nothing of the pleasures of country boys; and he amused the driver by asking, as they went along, whether certain green things in a field were not potatoes.

"Oh, golly!" said the driver, "he don't know termartes when he sees 'em!"

At this Thomas Jefferson and Faky laughed at Jack, just as if they knew any better themselves.

Mr. Dillon sat on the back seat, chewing the end of his morning cigar, and really enjoying the fresh smell of the country.

"Ah, Tancred!" he said to Faky, "you do not know how greatly you are favored to live in this clear atmosphere. You will soon become fat and weigh a hundred and eighty."

Faky looked up hopefully.

"Do you think so, papa? If I could get up my weight by next Thanksgiving, I'd be a great half-back, wouldn't I?"

"I was not thinking of that," said Mr. Dillon. "I am not sure that I approve of football. Well, boys, you will soon be at the scene of your stud-

ies. Now life begins. You will have to qualify yourselves for the work of life. You must look forward to earning your living."

"A boy doesn't need much," remarked Thomas Jefferson. "If I could shoot a squirrel or two every day, or have a few goats, I think I'd be content without going to school. If a boy has to go to school just to earn his own living, I think it is all nonsense. You can earn your living without going to school."

"But you cannot be respected in the world," replied Mr. Dillon; "and without an education you will always be last in the race of life. I hope, Tancred, that while at Professor Grigg's you will think somewhat of the choice of an occupation. When you write to me let me know the result of your reflections. I shall make any sacrifice to put you into a desirable position in life."

"Thank you, papa," said Faky, much pleased. He was sure that, after this promise, his father could not refuse to buy him a large schooner, or perhaps a brig, on which he could fly the black flag in a highly respectable manner.

The carriage drove rapidly through the flat country. Overhead was the bluest of blue skies; around, the cornfields wet with dew, and sprinkled with the pumpkins, which lay with their heavy heads on the ground, like boys lolling over their desks. Here and there was a house of wood,

painted brown or yellow, with an occasional red barn.

The carriage turned into a line between two hedges of osage-orange, which soon gave place to rail fences. The boys were dazzled by the sight of a great mass of marsh-marigolds, which seemed to stretch for half a mile. Another turn was made, and a line of cedars came in view on one side of the road. Behind these stretched a grove of tall oaks; and when these were passed, a gilded cross became visible.

“What church is that?” asked Mr. Dillon.

“The Catholic church,” said the driver. “St. Francis’ Church. That’s where Father Mirard is, and he’s a mighty good man. I ain’t a Catholic myself,” he went on, showing his white teeth as usual; “but he keeps me straight. ‘Tom,’ sez he to me, ‘whenever you feel like doing anything wrong, you jest come to me and talk it over. You know I’m safe.’”

Tom grinned so wide that the boys all grinned too, out of sympathy.

“Catholics go to confession *after* they’ve committed sin,” said Tom; “but Father Mirard wants me to go *before*. And I know,” he continued, seriously, “that he can see without looking. I used to be awful. In the watermelon season, and dark nights when you couldn’t see your hand in the chicken yard, why, I was there. I say, boys, if you are going to the Colonnade School, you’ll

have to walk a chalk line ; for Father Mirard can see right through you. He ain't sassy ; he just smiles serious like, and then you know he's found you out. He can look straight through you. I jest go and tell him things ; for he knows 'em, anyhow. There's Colonnade !”

All the eyes in the carriage followed the direction of Tom's whip. They saw twenty or twenty-five houses, bright and new ; all of wood, with porches and gables, and one or two with funny-looking little towers on them. Beyond was a white building, with a long row of columns holding up the roof of the porch. In front of it was a smooth lawn, dotted with fine maple-trees, which stretched to the river. From its red roof floated an American flag, the sight of which sent a pang through Jack's breast, because it reminded him of the lost freedom of his last Fourth of July.

“This is the village of Colonnade,” said Tom ; “and that is Colonnade House. Professor Grigg is not at home ; he went off to New York ten days ago. He lectures at Greenlawn to-night. He's a boss talker, Professor Grigg is. I suppose he'll be back to-morrow.”

The boys, except Jack, whose homesickness was coming back, began to be hungry ; but they forgot this in the desire to see the village, which consisted of one street. There was a confectioner's, a “saloon,” where “domestic wines and liq-

uors" were sold; a barber's shop—"Shackstein, Artist in Haircutting,"—and a few other shops. Altogether, the aspect of the place was not very promising to these city-bred boys.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Jack. "It will be like prison in this place. When a boy gets out, there will be no place to go."

The driver laughed.

"You won't get out very often," he said. "But if you like apples or grapes, there are a great many places to go. And chestnuts a little later. And over there is the best hickory grove in the country."

Thomas Jefferson and Baby Maguire and Bob Bently craned their necks. Jack, who was at heart a city boy, did not care for these things.

"You can buy nuts and apples and grapes," he said, "at any street corner; it is not worth while coming all the way out here for them."

"I suppose that there will never be a *matinée*; and a circus never comes out here, does it?" asked Faky.

"We have a circus over at Greenlawn every spring," said Tom, with pride. "We had Barnum's twice!"

"Oh, dear!" said Faky. "It's a long time to wait. I suppose nobody plays Rugby at this school; old-fashioned hand-ball goes here, I guess."

The driver looked offended.

“The Colonnade boys play *everything*,” he answered. “And they have plays of their own: they don’t need to go out to see circuses all the time. You ought to see the last play they had. There was thunder and lightning and red light, and four people all dead on the stage at once!”

“That must have been *great*,” said Faky Dillon, interested. “I wonder if they’ll give me a chance of acting?”

“I guess not,” said Tom, with an air of superiority. “You’d have to go in training. I know a boy who had to yell and screech and throw his arms about a whole year before they’d let him play.”

“I guess they don’t know much about theatres out here in the country,” said Faky, secretly abashed by Tom’s position. “I’d act Hamlet, if they asked me; but I’d have to have scenery. I intend to write a play of my own some day.”

Tom did not seem much impressed by this. Mr. Dillon began to ask questions about trains, and Tom did not deign to notice the boys; he believed it to be his duty to impress new boys. Faky *was* impressed; and after a while, when the carriage drew up before the archway in front of Colonnade House, he slipped a quarter into Tom’s hand,—a tribute which Tom received with becoming dignity.

Over the archway was painted, in big white letters, “Colonnade House.” The sight of it

made Baby Maguire remember his nerves and Jack's heart sink. Faky saw the emblem of their future seclusion with more calmness. He was fond of the theatre, and he looked forward with interest to the pleasant task of criticising the playing of the Colonnade House boys.

Jack sighed; his grief was too deep for words. Again he wished that he was back in his room, even if the Ancient History were his only companion.

Tom drove off, having assured Mr. Dillon that he would see him safely to the train he wanted; and the visitors were met at the hall-door by a white-haired priest, with bright eyes and a ruddy complexion, which made his hair seem even whiter. He wore his cassock and beretta; the only strange thing the boys saw about him was his slippers, with silver buckles on them. He stretched out his hand cordially to Mr. Dillon, and said, with a strongly marked French accent:

“Welcome to the house of my friend, Mr. Grigg! And the good boys! I am sure they *are* good boys. They are welcome, too. I am charmed to see them. Will you come to breakfast at once, Mr. Dillon, or would you like to go to your room with the young gentlemen?”

“He's not half bad,” whispered Baby Maguire to Thomas Jefferson. “He looks as if he knew something.”

Mr. Dillon assured the Abbé Mirard that he

and the boys had made their *toilette* on the cars; this was eagerly corroborated by Faky, who felt that if breakfast were delayed much longer he must begin to eat somebody.

Smilingly, Father Mirard led the way through the long tiled hall to a room on the left; it was very bright and neat, with white curtains and a great many red geraniums at the windows. There were red rugs on the floor, and the table glittered with silver and china. A large bunch of scarlet sage was set in a silver vase in the centre of the table; and, as the room was filled with sunshine and the aroma of coffee and beefsteak, the boys felt that life was not entirely gloomy.

"I am obliged to take the place of both the host and the hostess," observed Father Mirard, after he had said grace. "The professor is away, and madame presides at this hour in the refectory of the senior boys. She will return in a short time."

"It is not so bad, after all," Bob Bently said, as a servant brought in the steak and other aromatic breakfast things.

"Just you wait!" said Jack, gloomily.

X.

THE SCHOOL.

AFTER breakfast Mr. Dillon and the boys were taken over the grounds of Colonnade House. Mr. Dillon was pleased with all he saw. The boys examined the tennis-courts and the campus critically. Even Jack had no fault to find. The place was very quiet: one would never believe that sixty boys, of various ages, were enclosed in Colonnade House.

Father Mirard impressed the boys favorably. He seemed to know all about games, but it was evident that he was not fond of football. Bob Bently and he plunged at once into an argument.

“It is savage,” said Father Mirard. “It is a survival of the fighting instinct in the Saxon race. The English games are all rough.”

“But baseball isn’t an English game, Father,” said Bob.

“It *might* be an English game,” replied Father Mirard. “It’s rough enough.”

“Why,” said Faky Dillon, “if you have a mask and good gloves, you can’t be hurt. Of course, if you go catching balls with your bare hands, you may break a finger or so; but you have no business to play that way.”

“Back before the war,” Mr. Dillon said, “the baseballs were not so hard. I don’t think they put so much lead in them.”

“They had to use the lead for bullets in the war,” said Faky. “We’ve got more lead to spare now. And, you know, baseball is a more scientific game than it was then, papa,” he added, with quite an air of superiority.

Mr. Dillon smiled.

“You break more thumbs now. But I am like Father Mirard: I don’t care for games which must be played in armor. You may as well start to fight in tournaments, like the knights in ‘Ivanhoe.’”

“Football is a bloodthirsty game; the boys never play it in France,” said Father Mirard.

“They don’t!” exclaimed Bob Bently, in amazement. “What! they never play football! How queer!”

“And we seldom played it in my time,” said Mr. Dillon, as he stood observing the smoothness of the tennis-court. “And never what you call Rugby.”

Bob looked at Father Mirard and Mr. Dillon with inexpressible pity.

“What *did* you play?”

“Oh,” said Mr. Dillon, “we had tops and marbles and kites in the spring——”

“Kites?” said Baby Maguire. “What are kites?”

It was Mr. Dillon's turn to look with pity on the boys.

"Well, you've missed something," he said, "if you have never had a kite. It is more fun than fishing. And, then, the making of the kite,—it was a lesson in aeronautics. You got the colored tissue-paper and the paste and the string, and whittled the sticks. And then, when the wind was right, you reeled off your cord, and your kite mounted higher and higher, and floated in the air-currents between earth and sky."

"It must have been *slow*," said Thomas Jefferson. "A good game of marbles isn't bad; but there is nothing like baseball."

"I suppose the boys have begun to play football already?" asked Jack.

"Alas!" said Father Mirard, "I am desolated to say that they have. At least, I *think* they have; for I met a small boy with a very black eye yesterday."

"I wonder if they will give us a chance to play?" said Faky. "I'd like to show them something!"

"Why don't the boys play cricket any more?" asked Mr. Dillon. "In my time cricket was a great game."

"It's too English," said Bob Bently.

"And what is Rugby?" asked Mr. Dillon. "No game can be more English than Rugby."

"Oh, well, that's different!" said Bob. "We

like Rugby and we don't like cricket. I've gained ten pounds during vacation. Any fellow that *I* fall on will find me a pretty good weight."

The spirits of all the boys began to rise. They turned the corner of the house, and suddenly saw the whole school before them. In the centre of the campus, behind the house, about sixty boys, in grey uniforms, were drawn up in line; while a man, also in grey uniform, inspected them.

"Do we have to wear uniforms?" asked Jack, somewhat sadly.

"Yes, my child," said Father Mirard. "Professor Grigg believes much in the military manners. The boys are getting ready for their morning drill. The road there," he said, pointing to a path that ran to a gate, "leads to my little church and to my house. The boys of the school hear Mass on Wednesdays and Sundays."

The captain who was drilling the boys saluted the guests in the most military fashion; and his company wheeled and squared and presented arms, and went through all kinds of evolutions.

Baby Maguire's eyes fairly bulged.

"Shall I have to do all that?" he asked.

"Yes," said Father Mirard. "All the boys drill every day after breakfast."

"A good thing," Mr. Dillon said. "It makes them carry themselves well. And if a war should come," he added, smiling, "we shall have our soldiers ready-made."

“If a war broke out, would all the boys have to go?” asked Baby Maguire.

“Of course,” answered Jack; “and they ought to be glad enough to fight for their country.”

“But they wouldn’t take you if you had nerves,” continued Baby, taking Father Mirard’s hand. “You’d be no use at all, if you had nerves.”

“You’d have to go anyhow,” Thomas Jefferson said. “It wouldn’t make any difference. One battle would knock all the nerves out of you.”

“Oh, no it wouldn’t!” said Baby. “If I went into battle, I’d have my nerves so bad that the captain would have to stop fighting and look after me.”

The boys laughed at this, and even Mr. Dillon smiled.

The drill came to an end. The young soldiers, looking very smart in their grey suits, scattered in various directions; and Father Mirard led his guests toward the river which skirted the grounds on the east side. As they walked across the lawn in front of the house, they saw a woman approaching them.

“It is Madame Grigg,” said Father Mirard. “I must present you.”

Mrs. Grigg came forward smilingly. Father Mirard went through the ceremony of introduction with a grace that filled Jack and Bob with admiration. They looked anxiously at her, for

they knew that much of their future comfort would depend on her. She was much younger than Miss McBride; she had brown eyes, brown hair parted plainly on her forehead, and she wore a white gown with a great many ruffles. She bowed to Mr. Dillon, shook hands with Jack, Bob, Faky, and Baby Maguire, and kissed Thomas Jefferson.

“I always kiss the youngest scholar,” she said, gayly; “and this little boy is just the age of my Raymond.”

“You ought to have kissed *him*,” said Thomas Jefferson, in an injured tone, pointing to Baby Maguire. “*He’s* the youngest.”

“Yes,” said Baby, plaintively; “and I have nerves.”

“Do you teach the boys, Mrs. Grigg?” asked Mr. Dillon, politely.

“Oh, no!” was the reply. “I merely look after their comfort, and see that they are properly fed, that their clothes are mended, and that sort of thing.”

“Very necessary things,” said Father Mirard. “And she has a large family to look after,—and some boys have great appetites.”

“We try to make the school as homelike as possible,” said Mrs. Grigg. “Mr. Grigg takes all the higher branches, and Father Mirard looks after the theology and French, besides ——”

“Theology!” exclaimed Jack, forgetting his

manners and interrupting. "Is it like geology?"

"No," said Father Mirard; "and I think you know something of it already. It is Christian Doctrine."

Jack was relieved.

"I'm glad of that," he said. "Do you teach Ancient History here, Mrs. Grigg?"

"Certainly," said Mrs. Grigg. "We make a specialty of it. Let me walk to the river with you,—I notice the mail-carrier coming. There may be a note from Mr. Grigg. He probably reached Greenlawn last night. In that case, he may have sent me a note, or at least a postal card."

Baby thought of his green tickets, and asked:

"Will not the professor lecture to-night on Ancient History?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Grigg. "He is devoted to Ancient History."

Jack could hardly suppress a groan.

"I may say he actually *lives* among the Accadians," she went on; "and he is perfectly devoted to the Scythians,—perfectly. But you, my dear child, I am sure care very little for such abstruse studies."

"Oh, I love them!" said Baby Maguire, engagingly. "Our Susan often told us about the Acajans,—they were giants in Ireland, and ——"

But Mrs. Grigg had received her letters: she

was not paying attention. She looked at the addresses on the various envelopes until she came to a hastily written note.

“From Mr. Grigg!” she remarked. “I am sure, Mr. Dillon, that he would break his engagement, if he could, in order to meet you. If you could only stay here until to-morrow! He tells me,” and she glanced at the note, “that he reached Greenlawn safe, with no adventure, except—except—what can this mean? Oh, yes!—except with meeting with some boys of the most savage kind, who had filled his berth with some slimy things, which he was led to believe were young alligators—how awful, Mr. Dillon!—but he believes now that they were only pumpkin pies.”

“They weren’t—” began Baby.

Thomas Jefferson aimed at him a kick, which made him stop short.

“Mr. Griggs says that he was severely shocked by his experience, and that he would have to take medical advice before he can lecture to-night. He has obtained the names of the boys from the conductor and porter, with whom they had talked; and he will have them punished to the full extent of the law. He speaks of an angelic child who rescued him just as he thought he felt the fangs of an alligator enter his ankle—goodness gracious! how terrible!”

Baby’s face assumed a complacent smile. Mr.

Dillon, who was usually in what is called a "brown-study," could not help noticing that the other boys were downcast.

"Well, my dear boys," he said, "I am happy to tell Mrs. Grigg that you share in her horror of this nasty trick. A boy who would put alligators and pumpkin pie into a man's sleeping berth will be hanged some day."

"But suppose he didn't intend to do it?" said Jack, catching at a straw of consolation.

"In that case," said Mr. Dillon, sternly, "he must have been crazy, and an asylum is the only place for him. If Tancred Flavius here did such a thing, I should consider that either the state-prison or an insane asylum were the place for him. These young gentlemen, ma'am, are perhaps, somewhat playful, but they are not vicious."

"All boys are playful," said Father Mirard. "We pardon much in youth when there is no malice. Professor Grigg is not usually severe. I am sure that these young gentlemen are incapable of mixing up the products of the North and those of the South in a sleeping-car."

The boys made no answer, though Father Mirard smiled benevolently upon them. Baby alone looked jubilant,—the green tickets were safe in his pocket.

Mrs. Grigg put her letters into a velvet bag which hung at her side; and, taking Baby by the hand, led the way between two shining box-

wood hedges to the river. It was smooth and narrow, and almost hidden from view by bending elms and willows.

"The water is rather low just at the present time," said Mrs. Grigg,—“we have had a drought; but it is still high enough for boating and bathing. We like to call it a river; but compared with the Delaware and the Schuylkill it is only a stream.”

"It is a very nice little river," said Baby. "I hope the water is warm."

"Not always," said Mrs. Grigg. "Sometimes it is frozen. Mr. Grigg is devoted to physical culture; and there are boys here who, under the orders of the physician, take a plunge in the river even when they have to break the ice. And they like it."

"Oh, *I* could never do it!" said Baby, "Professor Grigg would not expect *me* to do it—I have nerves."

"That is one of Mr. Grigg's cures for nervous people," she said. "And I'm afraid that he may expect you to try it."

As if touched by a ray of sunlight, Bob's face shone.

"Oho, he's caught it now!" he whispered to Jack.

"We'll have to run away," Jack whispered in return. "Professor Grigg will make it hot for us."

“I’ll stay until I see that sneak of a Baby take his first plunge,” added Bob.

“I am afraid that my carriage will be waiting,” said Mr. Dillon, taking out his watch. “It must be almost train time.”

Mrs. Grigg regretted that Mr. Dillon could not stay for dinner, and Father Mirard that he could not see his church. The carriage was seen driving up to the house. Mr. Dillon said good-bye. And as he disappeared in the distance, Faky remarked to Thomas Jefferson :

“Grown-ups are queer! One school is as bad as another. I am going to run away, and earn my living by writing poetry.”

XI.

A SURPRISE.

WHEN Mr. Dillon had departed, Father Mirard took the boys to his church; Mrs. Grigg leaving, to attend to her duties.

“Of course you have *cong * to-day,” Father Mirard said. “You will not be expected to begin your classes until to-morrow.”

“*Cong *?” whispered Bob Bently. “What is *cong *?”

“Oh, recreation!” said Jack. “I knew a fellow from a French school, and he always talked of *cong *. Well, that is so much gained, anyhow. The worst can’t happen till to-morrow.”

Father Mirard told stories as they went along the path, bordered with high clover stalks just a little rusted by the hot autumn sun,—stories of adventures that made them forget that they were in a strange place and touched with homesickness. They reached the church, which was so bright and cheerful that the boys—even Baby, who was constantly engaged in thinking of himself,—felt their hearts lifted up.

They admired the lovely pictures of St.

Francis and St. Anthony of Padua over the side altars ; and Jack, though he was almost dazzled by the brightness of the interior of the church, said that "it was almost as full of prayer as old St. Joseph's."

This pleased Father Mirard and amazed Bob Bently, who had not considered Jack as a pious boy.

When they had said their prayers, and admired the Stations and the ceiling and the carving of the organ, they went out on the lawn and looked at Father Mirard's flower-beds.

They were all delighted with the priest. He was dignified, yet perfectly simple. He seemed never to think of himself—which is, after all, the root of good manners,—and he listened to the boys "as if," as Faky Dillon said, "we knew as much as he did."

In a short time it seemed as if they had known him all their lives. He led them into his house. The parlor seemed very bare to Jack, accustomed to the solemn "saloon parlors" of his neighborhood at home, with tidies and gilded frames and ornaments in abundance. In fact, there was nothing in Father Mirard's parlor but chairs, a table on which rested a big volume of the "Lives of the Saints," and a beautiful picture of the Annunciation over the chimney-piece.

Father Mirard's face glowed as he pointed to this picture.

“Is it not a treasure? It is a copy from Guido Reni.”

“It is very nice,” said Faky. “Is it a chromo or a real engraving?” And he looked at the picture very critically. As a poet, he felt it his duty to have opinions on art.

Jack blushed for him.

“Of course it is an oil picture,” he said, hastily; “and hand-painted too. Father Mirard wouldn’t have a chromo in his house. Why, they give away chromos with tea and newspapers and things.”

“I have seen beautiful chromos,” said Faky, “with watermelons in them greener and redder than anything *you* ever saw in real life, Jack Chumleigh. And have you ever seen our engravings? They’re in the front parlor,—‘Mercy’s Dream’ and ‘Washington Crossing the Delaware.’ Of course Father Mirard’s picture is very good, but you can’t pass it off on me as an engraving. You ought to see our pictures, Father Mirard! They’re boss!”

Father Mirard smiled; but he looked out the window, so that the boys did not see him.

Jack still blushed as Faky went on.

“I’ve read in a book about Guido Reni and Raphael and the other painters,” he said; “and I’d like to be a great artist myself. I think those little angels above the head of the Blessed Virgin are the most beautiful things I have ever seen.”

“It would look better if you had the lower part

of it repainted," said Bob Bently. "It might do, if you freshened it up a little."

The priest shook his head and smiled.

"I am afraid you know more about baseball and stamp collecting than about pictures, my little lads. When Professor Grigg has lectures on art, I hope you'll be sure to be present."

"Stamps!" exclaimed Faky. "Have you any stamps? I've lots of duplicates, if you want to trade. I'd give three Columbians and a Turkish for a Mauritius."

"I'll look among my effects some day," said Father Mirard, much amused by the boy's earnestness. "If you are very good, and give satisfaction to Professor Grigg, I will let you look through my letters yourself. I rather think that I have some letters from the Isle of France, but they're very old."

"The older the better," said Faky. He seized Father Mirard's arm, and poured forth a flood of information about stamps that amazed the amiable priest. "I've a set of Columbians, unused, I'd sell for three fifty," he said. "They go up only to ten cents, but in a few years they'll be worth their weight in gold. They're quoting them high in London now."

"I am much more interested in gathering stamps to help the missionaries," said Father Mirard. Then he turned to Jack. "What is your hobby, my child?"

“Ancient History,” interposed Thomas Jefferson, with a giggle, before Jack could answer.

“It is well,” said Father Mirard, not noticing Jack’s face. “I like boys to be interested in *something*. The listless, careless boy is worthless.”

“If I could find a Mauritius of the one and two pence, first issue, I’d be a made boy!” cried Faky, with sparkling eyes.

“Oh, I’m tired of his talking about stamps!” said Baby Maguire, with a yawn. “I wish it was dinner-time!”

“*I* wish there was somebody we knew among all those fellows up at the school,” put in Bob. “We’ll just have to stick together and hold our own,—that’s all.”

The feeling of homesickness struck them all again; and Jack’s heart felt like lead as he remembered the episode of the sleeping-car and Mrs. Grigg’s letter from the professor.

Father Mirard walked back with them through the clover path. Jack hoped that he would have let them go back without him. Homesickness and the fear of Mr. Grigg’s return had filled him with the desire to run away, and he wanted to talk the matter over with the other boys. He said to himself that if he could once get home and tell how he felt, he was sure his father and mother would let him stay at home. Life would be intolerable in this strange place.

“If we only knew somebody!” he said,—“if we only knew somebody!”

At the entrance of the campus, which was now deserted, Father Mirard bade the boys good-bye.

“I shall see you in the Christian Doctrine class to-morrow,” he said. “Keep up your spirits, and be good boys.”

“I like him,” said Faky; “though he seems to think a great deal about that old picture, and he doesn’t know much about stamps. The French boys must be strange. Think of his being surprised because he saw a boy with a black eye! Do you remember Miley Galligan, Susan’s cousin? He had three back teeth knocked out and a big dent in his head. *He* could play,—he could!”

Jack sighed. The mention of Miley brought back to him the big, warm kitchen, and all the homely sights and sounds he liked.

“If Miley or somebody we knew were only here!” he said. “I can’t stand it,—that’s all; and Professor Grigg’s coming after us with a sharp stick, too!”

“We’ll *have* to stand it,” replied Bob. “We must have an education, and the best thing we can do is to get it over as soon as possible. There is no use in worrying, Jack. Nobody could be queerer than Miss McBride, and we can’t be worse off than we were last winter.”

“I’ll run away!” said Jack, firmly.

Bob stood still, and the other boys halted too on hearing this bold language.

“Oh, don’t talk so silly, Jack!” Bob answered; “and before Thomas Jefferson and Faky, too. I’ve learned a good many lessons since I was a kid like Baby there, and I know that there is no use in running away from trouble. I’m not a religious boy, Jack; but I want to be, because it helps you to bear things. Little Guy showed me that. I really want to be good like him, Jack; and you—Faky Dillon, if you look as if you were going to laugh, I’ll smash your jaw!” he added, suddenly.

Faky, who sometimes assumed a peculiar squint, only intended to be funny; but he became grave at once.

“I don’t want to be goody-goody, but I want to be good; and I can’t be good and run away, and you can’t either. If we’re Christians”—Bob flushed and looked straight at Faky, whose face did not change,—“we’ve got to bear all this education and that sort of thing without going against our parents,—that’s all. I’ve said my say.”

“Well, but I can’t stand it! I’d rather be a poor boy in the streets than be what I am. *He’s* let alone sometimes. But with me, it has always been, ‘Jack, did you clean your teeth this morning?’—‘Jack, you don’t know your arithmetic.’

—‘Jack, why don’t you wear your gloves? Don’t you know you’re going to church this morning?’—And I’m sure it will begin all over again. And this Professor Grigg is down on us, too.”

Bob stood still, whistling, and cutting at the long clover heads with a stick he had picked up.

“I’ve been thinking of that,” he said. “Now, if we go straight to Professor Grigg, and explain to him how the pies got into his bunk, he isn’t much of a man if he doesn’t laugh over it with us. And then he’ll wipe off the slate.”

“I saw him,” said Faky, disconsolately. “He’s the kind of man that never laughs. Now, you can see by the twinkle in Father Mirard’s eye that he would laugh at one of our jokes if you explained it to him, and he’d wipe off the slate. But Professor Grigg is different.”

“*You* didn’t see him to speak to,” said Baby Maguire, with an air of importance.

“I saw his legs sticking out of the berth,” said Faky, indignantly, “and his shoes out on the floor. I tell you he didn’t have the kind of legs that take a joke, and his shoes were just as solemn,—*I* know!”

Faky had a great reputation as a reader of character. Silence followed.

“We shall not run away,—that’s certain,” said Bob Bently. “Jack, you be a man. You’re always afraid of things that never happen.”

Jack sighed. In spite of the sunshine and the scent of dried clover, and the red-cheeked apples visible through the leaves of the orchard, the world seemed gloomy.

Just as the boys reached the larger campus a number of boys in loose grey jackets marched from one of the side doors. A young man, who seemed to be in command of this squad, called out:

“Disperse!”

The boys broke ranks at once and scattered over the playground. Some of them rushed to the tennis-courts, others took possession of the diamond, and others began to kick footballs in the smaller campus behind the boxwood hedge.

The newcomers ranged themselves in a row, and looked at these operations with critical eyes.

“These fellows are not up to much,” remarked Thomas Jefferson. “Look at that little one trying to pitch. He can’t throw a ball.”

“Oh, my!” said Faky, contemptuously. “Well, *did* you ever! There’s a youngster that kicks somebody’s shin every time he aims at the football!”

“That’s the new way,” replied Thomas Jefferson, with an air of superior knowledge. “You try to skin a man whenever you can. That’s in the new Rugby tactics.”

“Look at the little fellow!—look at the little fellow!” screamed Faky, suddenly. “Go it,

shrimp! Go it, spider! You're all right! Go-o-o-o-o-o it! You're all right! It's a foul,—I say it's a foul!”

The little fellow, with a cropped head on which a big scar was visible, rushed up to where the boys were standing, and struck the earth heavily. But he was on his feet in an instant, holding the ball triumphantly. He caught sight of the boys and scowled.

“You call me spider again!—you call me shrimp!” he began. But his tone suddenly changed. “Why, don't you know me?” he said, cordially. “Didn't you get my watermelon? Well, you *are* peaches! Don't you know me? I'm Miley Galligan.”

XII.

THE POET AND THE PUGILIST.

MILEY'S face fairly beamed. "Just to think of you fellows being here!" he said. "Why, it's great! We'll run this school. I was just thinking of running away. I didn't want to come here; but I've an uncle-in-law—the biggest crank in the world; he writes books, and his name is John Longworthy,—and he said he'd pay for me at a good school, if I'd prepare myself for college. And mother pounced on me just as I was going down to the Battery Bath, and sent me here in charge of a conductor we know. I can't tell you how glad I am. But," he added in a whisper, "there isn't much fun here. It isn't like the schools you read about. They don't toss fellows in blankets, or do things like that. I tried to teach 'em last night, but they weren't up to it. The boys here haven't any snap."

Miley turned his back on the students, and led the way to the shade of a big maple on the edge of the campus. He threw himself upon the ground, surveyed the players with a supercilious air, and then invited his friends to follow his example and stretch themselves on the grass.

"I'm trying to size those kids up," he said.

"I don't know just who you ought to know. But we'll talk about ourselves first. Did you get my watermelon?"

"Yes," said Jack, sadly.

"You needn't be so short about it. You might thank a fellow," said Miley. "It was a bouncer, wasn't it?"

"Yes, it *was* a bouncer," admitted Jack.

"It bounced us out here,—that is, it helped," said Faky, with some bitterness in his tone. "But, of course, you meant well, Miley. We'll tell you all about it later. So you don't like this school?"

"I don't like *any* school," said Miley, frankly. "I got on pretty well with the Brothers. But they have eyes in the back of their head, and they find out everything. So mother had to take me away, because I played on the wharves, and they went and told her. And I was getting on well enough, too. There's one thing about the Brothers that I like," continued Miley, in a burst of confidence: "they settle with you at once. If they wallop you, why they wallop you,—that's all! They don't nag you about it as Miss McBride did."

"What do you think of this school, Miley?" asked Jack, anxiously.

"Oh, not much! The professor himself isn't here, but Mrs. Prof. is around. There's a fellow that teaches dancing and drills the boys, and there are a lot of other men; but they don't say

much to you. Mrs. Prof. patted me on the head and hoped that I wouldn't miss my mamma. I'm to be examined to-morrow ; I'll know more about the place then."

"Do the boys have much to say?" asked Bob Bently, while the others hung on Miley's words.

"I guess not," replied Miley. "I don't intend that they're to have much to say while I'm around." He screwed up his forehead and filled it with wrinkles, which were intended to express great fierceness of temper.

Faky Dillon laughed.

"You just look out!" Miley began. "I won't have anybody laughing if I don't know the reason."

Faky laughed again.

Miley jumped up and put himself into a fighting attitude.

"You're not going to laugh at me," he said, "in front of a lot of strangers,—not if I know it. I'll settle you."

"That's all right," said Faky, derisively. "I'm the only boy here about your own size, and you want to show off. Come on ; I'm not afraid !

"There was a small boy they called Miles,
And he couldn't stand innocent smiles ——"

Bob interrupted.

"Look here, Miley," he said, "I will have no fighting. It is a bad way to begin."

Miley looked at him defiantly.

“You’re not going to run this school!” he said.

“No,” replied Bob. “I haven’t time for that, but I am going to run myself; and I am going to see that there’s no nonsense among the crowd I’m in.”

“The idea of fighting with Faky for talking poetry!” said Thomas Jefferson. “Why, you’re awfully foolish, Miley. He can’t help it: he was born that way. And, besides, he would only write more poetry, and make everybody laugh at you.”

“It is a bad beginning, anyhow,” said Jack. “If we fight among ourselves, we can’t expect much respect from the other fellows. If you don’t like all of us, Miley, you’d better go over to the other fellows. We are not pining for you.”

Miley’s face lost its tough look; his bright eyes looked at Jack and Bob, to see whether they were in earnest or not. He saw that they were; he unclasped his fists and shook hands with Faky.

“But,” he said, “I’m a bruiser from Bruiser-town; and, if I ketch you making poetry about me, you’ll find that I’m all there.”

Faky began, gently:

“There was a small boy called Mil-ee,
He thought he could smash up poor me;
But Bob said he shouldn’t,
And I knew he couldn’t,—
So let’s laugh at unhappy Mil-ee!”

Miley rushed at Faky, but Jack and Bob held him back.

"This won't do," said Jack.

"I told you that punching Faky would be of no use," said Thomas Jefferson. "He isn't afraid, because he knows that he can get even with you some time. He'll have every boy in the school singing verses about you if you don't look out."

"Faky can't help it," put in Baby Maguire. "He can no more help it than I can help my nerves."

Miley reluctantly permitted himself to become peaceful.

This incident cast a gloom over the meeting; and, as none of the other boys came to speak to the strangers, Bob and Faky and Jack became more and more homesick.

At last Faky spoke:

"What kind of a time are we likely to have, anyhow?"

"A very bad time if you keep on being so sassy," said Miley, with a growl. "But remember, if you fellows want to run away, I'm with you."

"We don't want to run away," said Jack, suddenly. "I've found out that the only way to get on is to face what's before you. You may laugh, Miley, and you too, Faky, if you like; but duty is duty, and we've got to stick to our posts;

though I wish from the bottom of my heart I were home."

"I'm not laughing," said Faky. "I'm in for duty every time. If you fellows were literary, you'd know all about the boy that stood on the burning deck whence all but he had fled. There was duty that *was* duty. Professor Grigg, when he finds out that we are the boys that mixed him up with the custard pies in the sleeper, will make it as hot for us as that burning deck; but we'll have to stand it."

"I don't see why grown-up people can't see the difference between what's fun and what you *mean* to do," said Bob, impetuously. "You try to have some fun and you don't break a window: nobody minds. You try to have some more fun and you *do* break a window: everybody is down on you. It's 'Come here, sir, till I skin you alive!' And it's all sorts of scolding. 'Why did you play ball in the yard?' And you say that you *always* played ball in the yard, and it was all right until somebody left a shutter open, and your ball went through a pane of glass. Nobody minds what you say, or whether you intended to break the glass or not. If your ball goes through the glass, you're bad; if it doesn't touch the glass, you're good enough. A boy just has a dog's life,—that's all. I wish I were a girl."

There was an awed silence.

“You don’t mean that?” said Thomas Jefferson. “You wouldn’t like to be a girl. Did you ever see girls try to pitch a ball? Oh, my!”

“Yes, I do!” said Bob, desperately. “A girl has some rights. People are afraid that she’ll cry and sob, so they’re nice to her. I might howl till I was black in the face, and who’d care? Nobody.”

“You know you wouldn’t like to be a girl, Bob,” said Jack. “You’re just saying that, because you think Professor Grigg will take it out of us for putting the pies in his berth.”

“How did we know that he was going to get into that berth?” demanded Bob, taking his hands from his face and glaring at his friends. “If we did it on purpose, we’d have the fun of it to remember; but we didn’t do it on purpose, and we haven’t had the fun, and I don’t see why we should bear the punishment. It isn’t fair. And here’s Baby,—he was in it as much as we were, and he’ll come out all right. I say it isn’t fair.”

Bob buried his chin in his hands again.

Faky’s eyes moistened; but he recovered himself very quickly.

“I say, Bob, don’t look on the dark side of things. If to-day is gloomy, to-morrow will be bright,—you can make up your mind to that.”

Bob was not inclined to accept advice from a person of Faky’s age; but somehow it rather comforted him, though he growled out:

“What do *you* know about it?”

Faky only grinned.

“I’d like to see old Grigg jumping out of that berth again. If he cuts up rough I’ll make a poem on him,—that’s what I’ll do.”

“No,” said Jack, “you will not. We’ve got to respect Professor Grigg; it is part of our religion. And, whatever happens, we *must* begin right.”

“It is in the examination of conscience,” said Thomas Jefferson; “and if we were to make fun of Professor Grigg, we’d have to tell it when we went to confession.”

Miley sighed.

“But there’s a boss priest here,” he said. “He spoke to me the first time, and I showed him how to pitch. Just think, he had never played baseball in his life! And when I had taught him to pitch, he gave me a St. Benedict’s medal and a picture of Our Lord carrying a lamb. I’m going to confession regularly. I never did like to go. Mother had to chase me every time I went. Sometimes my Aunt Mary gave me candy to go; but the chasing was more fun. But now I am going regularly. I promised Father Mirard.”

“We’ll have to do the best we can,” said Jack; “but I do think that life is awfully hard for boys.”

A swift ball flew toward Jack from the

campus. He was on his feet in a moment. He caught it and sent it back. And a boy in uniform came running toward him.

“Halloo!” he said, in a soft voice, as he touched his military cap. “Do you want to play?”

“Cert!” answered Miley, promptly.

“Oh, not you!” said the boy. “*You!*” He pointed to Jack.

The latter nodded, and the two were off at once.

“I like that!” said Miley. “Jack drops us soon enough.”

“Why did that boy touch his hat?” asked Thomas Jefferson.

“It is the rule,” said Miley. “You’ve got to put on military airs here.”

Another boy—a round-faced, chubby boy, with a touch of the brogue,—came over to them and saluted. He had taken off his coat and wore a “sweater.”

“Your chum pitches well,” he said, good-naturedly. “Let’s all have a game. We thought you were chumps.”

Faky grinned.

“You’ll find out,” he said.

And for the next half hour all gloom disappeared.

XIII.

BEFORE THE EXAMINATION.

NATURALLY, the new boys were privileged. In the middle of the game of ball the dinner-bell rang. All the other boys formed into ranks and went to the wash-room, from which they came out with ruddy faces, and hands of a color that showed, at least, that the intentions of the washers were good. The new boys were taken to Mrs. Grigg's dining-room.

After dinner, which took place at noon, they were taken for a long walk by Father Mirard, who discovered without much effort, the exact amount of religious knowledge that each boy possessed. His impression was that Jack was the most pious; though Baby Maguire uttered several noble sentiments, with his eyes fixed on the apple orchard in the distance.

When the boys passed it, the apples were found to be very late ones, and still hard; so Baby abruptly deserted Father Mirard, and amused himself by looking for blackberries.

"To-morrow we begin work," he said, with a sigh. "I wonder when the cook will send us a box? *That's* something to look forward to."

“Mother will not send it till Thanksgiving. She said so,—I asked her,” said Thomas Jefferson.

“Cook will,” said Baby, confidently. “And Susan will try to send a better box than cook’s. I know just how they feel.”

“You are always thinking of eating,” remarked Thomas Jefferson, with a sneer. “You’re a little brute, Baby.”

“All right!” said Baby. “You may call names; but professor hasn’t got *me* in his eye. He isn’t going to be hard on *me*.”

The gloom deepened on Thomas Jefferson’s brow. However, he heard Bob asking Father Mirard some questions about Napoleon; and he hurried forward, anxious to forget the shadow of Professor Grigg.

“Oh, yes!” Father Mirard was saying, “my grandfather knew Napoleon well,—*very* well. He was a friend of one of his secretaries. Napoleon was a very amiable man at times, and his soldiers were devoted to him. Even after his death, his old troops—the troops of the *grande armée*—would have died for him. They tell a story of their devotion which you may find it hard to believe.”

“Tell it!—tell us!” said Jack, who loved stories about heroes, provided they were not out of the Ancient History. “Oh, tell us!”

“Well,” said Father Mirard, sitting down on

a stump beneath the largest apple-tree, "I will; but I do not vouch for its truth. The story is this, told by an American traveler: The Emperor once met one of his old guard in Russia. The old soldier had risen in the ranks, and wore the sword of a colonel. The Emperor spoke as if he doubted the devotion of the old guard. 'I lost an arm in the service of Napoleon,' he said; 'do you doubt that?'—'How you must hate a man who caused you such personal injury and shed so much blood!'—'Hate him!' said the old soldier, with flashing eyes. 'I hate him so much that I would lose my other arm in his service.' The Emperor, on whom the gloom of misfortune had begun to fall, smiled doubtfully. 'Yes,' repeated the devoted old soldier, 'I would lose the other arm for him.' Napoleon again smiled doubtfully. Suddenly the soldier pulled out his keen blade and cut off the other arm."

Father Mirard looked at the upturned faces.

"Is that all?" asked Baby Maguire. "Did he die?"

"That was awful!" said Faky Dillon. "I don't see how he could have done it."

Jack's eyes were fixed steadily on Father Mirard's face.

"Did your grandfather see that done, Father?" he asked.

"No," said Father Mirard, turning his face away.

“I don’t see how anybody could be such a fool,” said Jack. “Think of cutting your arm off for an old emperor! If George Washington had been in France, he’d have wiped out Napoleon. I don’t believe *anybody* would be foolish enough to do such a thing. Why, *I* wouldn’t do it for George Washington himself, and you know how much I think of George Washington. Why, it’s ridiculous!” cried Jack, more warmly. “It’s about as foolish as that story about Regulus and the barrel of knives, and Heliogabalus smothering people with roses. Why, if you hadn’t told it about Napoleon, Father, it would have passed for a story out of the Ancient History. It is just like what some of those queer people that lived with Hannibal or Alexander would do.”

Bob looked thoughtful. Then a twinkle came into his eye, and he saw an answering twinkle in Father Mirard’s.

“Why,” exclaimed Faky, suddenly, “how *could* he cut off one hand?”

The boys did not let him finish. They made a rush for Father Mirard, who, forgetting his cassock, actually rolled over on the grass. From that moment they were devoted friends of his; and they laughed so much over the neat way in which he had taken them in that they forgot—as he intended they should—all the doubts and fears that had oppressed them. He took them to his house for supper, for which he taught them to

make a salad of the second growth of dandelion leaves. And after supper he made them learn some old French songs: "Au clair de la lune,"¹ and "Sur le Pont d'Avignon."² They went home singing at the top of their voices:

" Nous n'irons pas au bois,
Les lauriers sont coupés."³

And Father Mirard stood at his door, waving his hand to them.

"It makes me young again," he said, as he closed the door and took up his Breviary. "Dear me!" he added, laughing, "I have been a boy all the afternoon."

The boys went to bed in the dormitory where all the other boys slept. It was a long room with big windows, into each one of which was fastened a ventilating apparatus which resembled a little wheel. And when the wind blew hard in the night, these little wheels made a buzzing like that of a hundred flies. The old boys did not mind it; but the new ones, as they lay in their narrow white beds and waited for sleep to come, it was a matter of great annoyance, especially as Baby Maguire informed them that it was caused by mosquitoes preparing to make a

¹ In the light of the moon.

² On the bridge of Avignon.

³ We shall go no more to the woods,
The laurel-trees are cut.

descent on them. The buzzing soon ceased, however, as far as they were concerned; it was not long before they were so far in the land of dreams that even a clap of thunder could not have awakened them.

The next day, after breakfast with the other boys, they were ranged in front of the wall in Professor Grigg's study. Even Baby Maguire's heart sank as the professor entered and took his seat behind the green covered table, strewn with books. Faky could not see his legs: they were concealed by a large waste-paper basket under the table; but he knew that this tall, whiskered, and rather severe-looking gentleman was the hero of the sleeping-car adventure.

No grown-up person, who has lost his memory of the past, can believe how Jack and Bob and Thomas Jefferson, and even the courageous Faky, suffered as they stood against the wall waiting for the professor to examine them. His head was buried in the folds of a large blue letter, and he did not raise it for some time. Faky noticed that the envelope bore a Hamburg stamp. He was divided between the desire to obtain that stamp and a feeling of unreasonable fear that made his hands become cold and clammy. A gush of joy seemed to enter Bob Bently's heart. The professor bent his head over his letter; and when he raised it for a moment, Bob saw that he wore eyeglasses with double lenses. He was

near-sighted, Bob thought, and evidently *very* near-sighted.

It was cruel of Baby Maguire, when he knew very well how the other boys felt, to grin at them with such an air of triumph. It was more cruel for him to raise up his two green tickets, with an irritating air of enjoyment, just as the professor had buried his nose in the blue letter again.

“I can’t imagine why Herr Ganzenheimer confuses the dative case of the Homorinthian dialect with the vocative used only in the Accadian folk songs,” he muttered. Then he forgot all about the waiting boys.

With a sweet smile, which grew sweeter as he saw the frowns on the faces of the other boys, Baby restored, as he thought, the precious tickets for the lecture to his back pocket—the “pistol pocket,” which every self-respecting boy used to insist on having in his breeches,—but the pocket was full of unripe apples. An upward glance of the professor caused Baby to start suddenly, and the tickets fell to the floor. They were snatched by Faky Dillon before anybody else saw them. Faky no longer feared, and Bob was amazed when one of the green tickets was thrust into his hand. Faky’s wink told all, and now Bob no longer feared. Jack and Thomas Jefferson were utterly wretched. Jack wished with all his heart that something would happen. How

tempting the green lawn was! It stretched between the rows of scarlet geranium beds to the white palings of the fence, and beyond was the blue sky which covered home,—“home!” Oh, if he could only jump out that window and run! To add to the horror of the moment, Thomas Jefferson read the word “Algebra” on the back of one of the books on the professor’s table.

“Jack,” he whispered, “will he ask us *that*?”

“What?”

“*That*,” said Thomas Jefferson, pointing to the book. “O Jack, how much is two-thirds multiplied by six-fifths? I’m sure he’ll ask us fractions. What’s the rule of fractions,—addition of fractions, I mean?”

“I can’t think,” answered Jack, his gaze divided between the bald spot on Professor Grigg’s head and the baleful algebra book.

“What range of mountains are the Himalayas?” demanded Thomas Jefferson, in a fierce whisper. “*They* always ask that. O Jack, tell me!”

“I can’t think,” said Jack, stupidly. “I know that the Nile is in Africa, Tom; but that’s all I know just now.”

Thomas Jefferson plucked Faky Dillon’s sleeve in agony.

“Where’s Thibet?—where’s Thibet?” he asked. “Miss McBride told me that if I missed Thibet a third time—*he’ll* be certain to ask that. I’ve

forgotten everything. And who were the Accadians?"

"I don't know," answered Faky, with a suppressed chuckle. "Suppose you ask the professor?"

This flippant answer froze the words on Thomas Jefferson's tongue.

"I'll ask him, if you want me to," whispered Faky, with unparalleled boldness. "Professor," he said aloud, "may I disturb you? We are much interested in the Accadians, and we thought that perhaps you would tell us about them."

Professor Grigg quickly raised his head, and looked through his glasses straight before him.

"Ah!" he said, after a pause, during which he was trying to see the speaker, "you are the young gentleman from Philadelphia? I will examine you presently. The Accadians? A very interesting people. I have a letter from a dear friend, formerly of the University of Leipsic, on the same subject. Which of you boys are interested in the Accadians?"

"Me!" said Baby Maguire, stepping forward, with pride and triumph in every motion. "I read about them on the tickets for your lecture. You gave them to me, you know."

Bob and Faky suddenly moved nearer to the table, with the green tickets ostentatiously displayed.

The professor, who had only partly under-

stood Baby Maguire, caught sight of Faky's ticket.

"I am much obliged to you, my good little boy," he said in a kindly way, "for your assistance the other night. And you gave a ticket to your friend—this large boy? What is his name?"

"Robert Bently, sir."

"Dear! dear!" said the professor. "A very good name. I regret that I have not yet discovered the wicked boys who caused me so much inconvenience in the sleeping-car."

Baby Maguire, amazed at the appearance of the green tickets, was hastily searching his pockets. He held up his hand.

"Please, teacher," he said to the professor, "*those* are the wicked boys. I am the only one that ought to be talked to about the Accajans."

The professor looked at him steadily and severely.

"I fear," he said, with a frown, "that your little friend has a malicious nature, Mr. Bently."

XIV.

THE EXAMINATION.

JACK'S hands were cold and clammy: he felt a sinking at the heart. No matter how much "fooling" Bob Bently and Faky Dillon might go through, the inevitable examination must come. If he could only recall the date of George Washington's death, he would have felt better. Was it 1732? Columbus he knew by heart. He ran over several sums in decimals in his mind; and then, jumping into fractions, he began to count furiously on his fingers, with an expression of agony on his face.

Baby Maguire's jaw fell. Thomas Jefferson's fist doubled up. What right had Baby Maguire to tell in that way? He regretted bitterly all the opportunities he had neglected,—opportunities of forcibly putting better principles into Baby's mean little mind.

Faky looked at Professor Grigg, quite cool and unconcerned. Bob Bently seemed uncertain. There was an expression in Professor Grigg's spectacles that made him hesitate, but Baby's last speech about the wicked boys decided him.

"I am glad," said Professor Grigg, looking sternly at Baby Maguire, "that you have come to

Colonnade House. Your sojourn here will perhaps convince you that manliness is one of the best rules of life. You have endeavored to appropriate the favor which I showed to your friends; and not only that, but to fasten upon them a misdemeanor of which, to judge by their open and innocent faces, I feel that they are incapable—entirely incapable.”

Faky smiled broadly; Bob Bently’s conscience began to reproach him. After all, fun was fun, and Baby certainly was “nasty”; but it would not be right to put him “into a hole,” in which he would probably stick for a long time.

“You gave *me* the tickets, sir!” said Baby, beginning to cry. “Indeed you did! *I* was the boy that helped you.”

The professor shook his head sadly.

“Your countenance, as well as I can see it, shows the depravity working in your heart. I begin to suspect that you yourself helped to put those slimy and unpleasant objects into my berth in the car. Did you or did you not? Answer me!”

Baby looked around him helplessly. And honest impulses rose in the hearts of Jack and Bob. Jack spoke first.

“We all did it,” he said. “Baby was no more responsible for it than anybody else. We did not mean any harm. You see, the pies and things——”

“Things!” said the professor. “Was there or was there not an alligator among them?”

“Oh, no!” said Baby Maguire. “We didn’t have an alligator. There was a boy in the car with a young alligator, but we did not put it into your berth, sir. We never thought of it.”

“I cannot accept your testimony, Master Maguire. I wish I could. I appreciate the kind impulse of your friends to excuse you, but I am under the impression that their intention is rather more generous than just. However, we shall endeavor here at Colonnade House to inculcate more stringent principles of honor and honesty.”

“These tickets are really his,” said Jack, giving Faky’s green lecture tickets to Baby, Bob having relinquished his. “I don’t care to tell how we got them,—it was only fun, anyhow. And, if you don’t mind, Bob and I will take any punishment you choose.”

And Jack was at that moment quite willing to take any punishment—except the examination.

“There will be no punishment in this case,” said Professor Grigg, smiling. “I judge you by your generous though mistaken intentions. As for Master Maguire, I shall look after him later.”

Baby Maguire shivered.

“Please, teacher,” he said, holding up his hand, “I have nerves.”

Professor Grigg frowned so darkly and Baby

looked so frightened that Bob could not help speaking up.

“He was not any more to blame than we were, and you *did* give him the tickets. I think it is all nonsense to blame us for an accident. Baby *is* tricky; I suppose he was born so. I’d like to punch his head,—I’ll admit that; but I don’t like to see him frightened half to death. You gave him the green tickets, sir.”

Bob straightened himself, expecting the storm to burst.

“We will not proceed with the examination,” said Professor Grigg. “I shall not attempt at once to solve this mystery.”

“It is just our luck,” Bob whispered to Faky. “We get into scrapes wherever we go.”

“I’m sorry,” whispered Faky in reply. “It’s all my fault. But Baby is so sneaky. A fellow can’t help doing things when *he* is about.”

“And now, young gentlemen,” began the professor, opening a book, and then falling into absent-minded silence, while the boys waited.

Jack’s memory seemed to desert him, and his hands grew colder. When was George Washington born? What are the constituents of air? Where is the leaning tower of Pisa? At what rate does light travel? These distracting questions kept rushing through his brain, yet he could find no answer. He had been able to answer them all once. If the bell would ring,—if some-

thing would happen! The door opened quickly, and Miley Galligan entered.

"Please, sir," he said, with an unabashed air that Jack envied, "I have been sent in for my examination."

He grinned at his friends, and took his place at the head of the line. He wore a brown sweater, and his short hair had been parted, evidently with difficulty, in the middle.

"Oh! Ah! I see!" said Professor Grigg, arousing himself. "I have seen you before, Master Galligan. You are from New York, I believe. How is your esteemed relative, Mr. Longworthy? His last book on 'Social Problems and Poverty' has given much pleasure to me." The professor looked at Miley during this little speech without at all seeing him. "We will proceed to the English examination. What are you reading, Master Galligan?"

Miley did not answer at once. His face grew very red; he glared at the boys, and then whispered threateningly to Faky:

"Did you put the old bloke onto me?"

"I don't understand such language," said Faky, with great presence of mind.

"What are you reading?" asked the professor, severely. "Are you deaf, young man? Have you read 'Robinson Crusoe,' by Daniel Defoe?"

"I don't read such childish books," retorted Miley.

“‘Ivanhoe,’ by Sir Walter Scott, has, I presume, pleased you?”

“Never heard of it,” returned Miley. Then in a whisper: “If you fellows have been telling on me, I’ll settle you. Why doesn’t he ask me questions about ’xamples and g’ography? This ain’t a library: it’s a school.”

“Answer me, sir,” said Professor Grigg.

Miley’s face grew so red that the big freckles on his cheeks and nose turned the color of sunset. Jack forgot his anguish in the interest of watching him.

“What have you been reading?” repeated Professor Grigg.

“It’s out, I suppose,” said Miley, bitterly. He began to tug at the ragged mass of paper in his left pocket,—a pocket which bulged very much. “I have been reading, ‘Mole-Eyed Jack; or, The Bunco Man’s Despair.’ There it is! I’d like to know who told?”

Professor Grigg looked at the ragged pamphlet on his desk, and lifted it on the point of his long paper-cutter close to his glasses.

“I am astounded,” he said, “that any self-respecting boy should fill his mind with such trash. I sincerely hope, young gentlemen, that none of you reads this sort of—literature.”

The boys did not reply. Baby Maguire was about to testify to his interest in the Accadians, when he was cut short by a look from Bob

Bently. The truth is, they were heartily ashamed of Miley's taste,—and he was a friend of theirs, too! The pamphlet was soiled and ragged; and on its cover was the picture of a man in a tall hat, with a big diamond in his shirt front, stabbing another man with an enormous poniard. As the wretched thing lay at the edge of Professor Grigg's desk, it seemed to the boys as if something unclean had entered the room.

Miley hung his head. He read in the looks of the boys that they were ashamed of him. He was angry with them, but most of all with himself. He hated the sight of the bundle of soiled pages. Under other circumstances, Miley would have boasted of his "smartness" in reading such books as "Mole-Eyed Jack" and no doubt in certain circles he would have been looked upon as a hero for knowing a great deal about such vile stuff. The shame that showed itself on the faces of the boys had more effect on him than any number of lectures from grown people would have had.

"I repeat," said Professor Grigg, in a kindly but serious voice, "that I hope none of you young gentlemen will degrade your minds by reading books of so low a description as this."

"There are worse books than that," said Miley, sullenly.

"There may be," said Professor Grigg. "The boy who reads them, deliberately opens his heart

to the devil,—deliberately! This book is not wicked: it is only vulgar,—I am sure of that. It does not excite you to sin, but it shows how ‘smart’ people gain, through all manner of sharp tricks, money and everything else they want; doesn’t it?”

Faky’s eyes twinkled and he whispered to Jack: “The professor must have read ‘Mole-Eyed Jack.’”

“No,” answered Professor Grigg, with a smile that made the boys less afraid of him; “but I know that kind of book. If I should read it aloud to you, and point out its absurdities, you would laugh at yourselves for ever having looked into it. You wouldn’t think it ‘smart’ to read such a low and foolish book. Now, Master Galligan,” continued the professor, “since ‘Mole-Eyed Jack’ is the latest book you have read, suppose I examine your knowledge of it? I can, at least, tell whether you have a good memory or not.”

Professor Grigg rose at once in the estimation of the boys; he knew how to handle Miley Galligan. Miley’s face flushed to the color of a pink peony. He observed the grin on the faces of the boys, otherwise he would have fled from the room. He faced Professor Grigg as boldly as he could.

“What have you learned from this book?” asked the professor.

Miley hesitated. Faky chuckled; and Miley answered:

“I dunno.”

“Do you recall any passage that interested you?” asked the examiner.

“Yes,” said Miley. “There’s a place where Mole-Eyed Jack comes in wid de two revolvers and de dagger in his teeth, and says to de Bunco Man: ‘Gimme your ill-gotten gains.’ De Bunco Man tinks he is a detective, and he gets de Bunco Man’s money and has a good time. And den he beats de fat old banker at a game of poker, and cheats him by keeping tree kings under de tablecloth. And when Jimmy de Moke is about to run away wid de Eyetalian girl, Jack comes from behind de door when his name is mentioned, in a burst of highsterical laughter, and says, ‘I’m him.’ And——”

“Parse ‘him,’” said Professor Grigg.

Faky laughed aloud, and even Jack smiled. Miley did not answer.

“You have been wasting your time, Master Galligan,” said the professor. “If you had associated less in your thoughts with such persons as the Bunco Man and Jimmy the Moke, you might have learned to speak gentlemanly English. As it is, you will have to choose better mental society for the future. Boys,” he added, “you may go to the campus now. Mr. O’Conor will find out what your acquirements are during

your attendance at his class in the coming week. You have, I hope, learned that a boy cannot read books or papers of a low type without its showing in his speech and even in his actions. Go now, and let wholesome air and honest play blow off the bad air of 'Mole-Eyed Jack.'"

The professor buried his spectacles in his book, and seemed to forget the boys.

"Thank Heaven!" said Jack, heartily. "We're free for awhile. But I think I'll like the professor."

"He's no slouch," said Miley.

"You have been reading 'Mole-Eyed Jack,'" began Faky. "I say, what became of the Bunco Man?"

Miley rushed at him. Faky dashed into a group of boys, and they closed around him. No allusion was made to Miley's literary taste after that.

XV.

THE FIGHT.

DURING the next few days life was full of novelty. Faky received a new football from his brother Bert; and Bob Bently's sisters and Selina Butterfield, his cousin, sent him two beautiful "tidies,"—"which would be so nice for the rocking-chairs in your room." Bob laughed when he saw them, and put them hastily into his trunk.

Mr. O'Connor, who had the superintendence of the classes under Professor Grigg, soon discovered the abilities of the boys; and Jack found himself wafted into the right class without either fear or trembling.

By the time their grey uniforms had been made, the boys were quite at home, and Faky Dillon had begun to decline "*mensa*"; for Latin was the backbone of the school. Faky got on better than the rest, because he was fired with a desire to write a Latin ode in honor of Susan's birthday. He felt that this would do more to keep up his reputation in the Chumleigh kitchen than any number of mere English lines. After the second day's work in the declensions he

wrote the first line, which showed the extent of his knowledge and the estimation in which he held Susan. It ran :

“ Susanna Susannarum.”

There it stopped for some time.

The boys did not make friends at first. They formed a group of their own, and they were quite subdued by the superior knowledge their companions showed of the manual of arms. Faky pretended to despise the football methods of Professor Grigg's boys, but he was obliged to confess his admiration for their drilling. Colonel Weaver, an old army officer, looked after this. He lived in the house next to Father Mirard's, and he regarded drilling as the first duty of man.

Roger O'Mally and Stephen Osborne soon made the acquaintance of Jack and Bob. Roger had lived in Ireland during most of his life, with the exception of a year spent in a Jesuit college in England. He and Jack became fast friends. Osborne was nearly seventeen years of age, but he looked older. He was suspected of delicately darkening his upper lip with a burned match stick, and his “ West Point waist ” was admired by those boys who affected military manners. Stephen always talked of the “ mess,” and read Captain King's novels whenever Mr. O'Connor permitted him to read anything except a

“classic.” He was captain of the senior division of Colonel Weaver’s troops.

In his heart Bob did not like Osborne; but he had such an air of authority, he knew so much of the world, and his “West Point waist” gave him so much prominence, that Bob overlooked many things which he did not tell to Jack.

Besides Mr. O’Conor there were six other tutors, and the boys had not been in the school a week before they had made up their minds as to the character of each. Guy’s coming had been postponed, so they had nothing much to distract them from the people about them.

Faky and Thomas Jefferson and Baby Maguire were separated from their elders. They were part of the junior squad, and under the direction of Mr. Mallony, a young tutor, whom they learned to like, for the main reason that he was entirely just.

The boys of the senior department passed rapidly from class to class during the day. The campus during the drilling hour was in charge of Colonel Weaver and his assistant; after that two tutors, proficient in all the games, appeared. The elder boys had small rooms in an octagonal building behind the main house; the small boys slept in a large dormitory. Thomas Jefferson cried during the first night, but managed to answer “Yes, ma’am!” when Mrs. Grigg passed through the room on her evening tour of inspec-

tion. Faky and Baby Maguire were always too tired when night came to think of home; but Thomas Jefferson had tearful visions for a month of his father, mother, Susan and the cook, and of little Guy, of Uncle Mike, and of all the people he liked; and these visions made his heart sad. As the demands of Mr. O'Connor, in his classes, increased, and the fury of football became greater, Thomas Jefferson dropped to sleep as soon as the Rosary had been said, and dreamed only pleasant things of the life in Philadelphia.

By the time Bob had become used to his new uniform, and had begun to walk with some of Stephen Osborne's rigidity, a coldness had grown up between him and Jack.

"Osborne and I," Bob said, "are going to have a little game of cards over in the grove this afternoon,—it's *cong e*, you know. Come, join us."

Bob looked very trim; his white cotton gloves were spotless and well-fitting. He stood in the hall of the barrack-room, weighing his gun in his hand, and assuming the Osborne air as well as he could.

Jack was looking for his knapsack; for the colonel had ordered them out in full regalia. He frowned as Bob spoke.

"I am much obliged, Bob," he said; "but I don't care for Osborne."

"What's the matter with Osborne?" asked

Bob. "He comes of one of the best families in Boston. He is a gentleman, I suppose," added Bob, bitterly. "You object to him because he is a gentleman. He can't help that."

Jack felt his temper rising; so he was silent.

"You've foolish ideas, Jack, old boy," continued Bob, with an imitation of Osborne's drawl that made Jack feel unreasonably angry—"mad," as he said himself. "If he happens to have had a grandfather, *he* can't help it."

"He *can* help talking about it so much," answered Jack.

"If your ancestors were in Longfellow's 'Evangeline,' you would point them out, wouldn't you? There is no use being jealous of Steve Osborne because he has good blood in him."

"I don't care anything about your old Osborne. He has good clothes, if *that* is what you mean."

"You prefer that scrub O'Mally, that has no snap,—a regular Molly!"

"Do I?" said Jack, turning away. The sneer in Bob's voice made the tears come very near his eyes; for a moment he could not speak.

"Osborne thinks you're a decent fellow, and he says that he has heard of your father in Boston. We're going to form a club—just a few of us men, you know,—a sort of club-on-the-quiet, you know."

"To play cards?" asked Jack.

"A little."

“But Professor Grigg forbids all card playing.”

“He has no right to do it!” exclaimed Bob. “Osborne says he’s an old woman, anyhow. At home you know that your father or my father never objected to card playing.”

“That’s all right,” said Jack, tightening his belt and taking up his musket; “but a rule is a rule. We’re in Professor Grigg’s house now.”

“That’s O’Mally’s opinion,” returned Bob, with a sneer modelled after Osborne’s manner. “He got that at the Jesuit school, where they keep the reins tight.”

“If you take your opinions from Steve Osborne, that’s no reason why I should take mine from anybody,” said Jack, straightening himself and awaiting the call of the bugle.

“You’re jealous,—that’s all!” retorted Bob. “You don’t like Osborne because he is my friend.”

“I don’t like his looks.”

“He’s the best-built fellow here. I wish I had a figure like his!”

“I’m not talking of that. He’s a dude; he thinks more of his waist than he does of his lessons. He’s a peacock,—that’s what *he* is.”

“If anybody else insulted a friend of mine in that way, I’d smash his face,” exclaimed Bob, reddening to the roots of his hair.

“Smash!” said Jack. “I’m ready. I know

what Osborne's up to. He wants to play cards for money ; and you know it's wrong for us boys to play cards for money or to bet our money."

"What's wrong about it?" asked Bob.

"It's forbidden here, and you know that our people at home would be ashamed of us if we gambled."

Bob shrugged his shoulders.

"Philadelphia is a slow place," he said, sarcastically.

"And Boston is 'so awfully fast'!" retorted Jack. "The old town is good enough for me, and I wish I were back there now. I will not play cards with you, Bob ; and if I find you getting Faky or Miley or ——"

"Don't be afraid. They're kids. And I hardly think Steve Osborne would care to associate with Miley Galligan."

"All right!" said Jack, trying to look cool. "I'll stick to Miley Galligan."

"Naturally," said Bob, curling his lip, "you prefer Miley to the society of a gentleman like Steve. You can't help it, I suppose."

"I can help gambling."

"Your friend O'Mally prefers to read his prayer-book to enjoying himself like a man, and you're welcome to him. He's a girly-girly hypocrite ; he's a fake!" exclaimed Bob, losing the Osborne manner and becoming very much himself.

"I don't know what you're after calling me," said the voice with the brogue from one of the curtained recesses in which the boys dressed for the games and the drill; "but if I'm a fake, you're another."

And Roger O'Mally's curly reddish head appeared. He put on his cap and advanced to the boys.

"Listening, of course!" said Bob. "No gentleman would listen."

"It seems to me you're talking a great deal about *gentlemen* lately," said Jack.

"Faith, you're right!" added O'Mally; "but that's Steve Osborne's word. He's always reminding himself when he does anything bad that he's a gentleman, after all!"

"*You* let Steve Osborne alone!" said Bob, threateningly.

"I knew him before you, and I'll have my say. And, more than this, I know that if you and Steve Osborne are found out playing cards, you'll be suspended or expelled."

"Osborne says that you've been caged up in a Jesuit school," said Bob, sneering again; "and that you don't know how gentlemen act in the world."

"Steve had better tell me that to my face," answered O'Mally, taking off his gloves. "But if you want me to act toward you as I'd act toward him if he said it, just say it again!"

There was silence. The other boys had gone onto the campus, to wait for the call.

Bob looked into O'Mally's resolute eyes, and his temper rose.

"Well," he said, "you're a—a—fake!"

O'Mally threw off his jacket; Bob did the same. Jack caught O'Mally by the collar of his shirt.

"You let me go!" yelled O'Mally, struggling.

Jack measured O'Mally with his eye. He was slender and strong. He was in excellent fighting trim; while Bob, like most city boys, was somewhat flabby. He saw that Bob would have no chance.

"Here, O'Mally," he said, "you let Bob Bently alone!"

"What have *you* got to say about it?" asked O'Mally. "You mind your own business!"

At this moment another boy, John Betts, came running into the barrack; he had forgotten his gloves.

"What's up?" he asked, innocently; and unhappily he stepped between Jack and O'Mally; and the blow which Jack, in his anger, intended for his new friend fell on Betts. Before Betts could realize what had happened, a three-cornered fight was going on over his prostrate form, and several oblique fist-blows made him tingle.

"Pretty work, young men!" said the voice of Colonel Weaver, as he looked in at the door.

“Beautiful work! The guardhouse is the place for you.”

The boys stood up, sobered. Betts preferred to remain on the floor,—he was farther from the colonel’s eye.

“A pretty record you boys are making!” he said, angrily, to Jack. “Two fights in as many days merit serious punishment.”

XVI.

THE PLOT THICKENS.

FAKY'S Latin poem was painful. It is hard to write a Latin ode when you scarcely know the first declension. He had finished the second line one afternoon in the study hall, and he was beginning a third when the letters were given out.

“Susanna Susannarum,
Rosa rosarum,
Puella ——”

He had got this far when he received a letter. Guy was on his way, and Jack Chumleigh's dogs had been sent back by a friend in the country who had borrowed them. He waited eagerly for the bell to ring for recess, in order to impart this news to his friends.

But Thomas Jefferson had better news,—at least, *he* thought it was better news. Susan announced, in a short note, that she and Rebecca were packing a box.

After the fight which had been interrupted by the colonel, Jack and Bob had marched on to the campus with fear and anger in their hearts. There was no doubt that the colonel would re-

port them, and they knew that such a report meant punishment of some kind. O'Mally, who was a good-humored little fellow as a rule, went off much offended.

The drill was usually severe, for it was a hot day; and Jack's shoulders began to droop in spite of himself, and Bob could no longer attempt to imitate Osborne's military figure.

Fighting, especially among the seniors, was a crime at Professor Grigg's school. If a boy called another a liar, it was understood that he might deal with him with his fists, but not in uniform. To be caught fighting in uniform was a heinous offence. And to think, Jack said, that he should be in such a scrape for quarreling with Bob! And to think that Bob should have taken up with Steve Osborne!

Jack's words rankled in Bob's mind. In his heart, he knew that Steve Osborne's opinions and expressions of them were wrong, and that was why he resented Jack's words. Steve Osborne had said that both he and Jack looked as if they had always been tied to their mother's apron strings, and he was ashamed of this. Osborne knew all about the world. He had a latch-key when he was at home: he went in and out when he chose. He said he knew all the theatrical people, and he had a collection of his friends in little photographs taken from cigarette packages. Bob did not care for these; he was

immensely interested in the great baseball people, of whom Steve had no pictures, but whom he said he knew intimately. Bob admired Steve, and at the same time he felt that he would be happier if he had not known him. He was flattered by the attention Osborne showed him.

In the space of a week Bob had begun to change. He was not the same Bob. He did not know it, but it was a new Bob that looked on the world out of the old Bob's eyes. The old, simple, honest Bob had become something different. Bob's better self recognized this; his lower self was the slave of Steve Osborne.

"I say," said Osborne, calling from the dressing-box in the barrack to Jack, after the drill, "do you new boys expect a box from home before Thanksgiving?"

Jack pretended to be very busy, and did not answer. What business had Osborne to ask such a question?

"How about that, Bently?" he called out to Bob.

"Oh, we'll get a box!" said Bob.

"I wish it would come. The grub is beastly at this school. I've been used to different kind of things."

"I think you're a great deal fatter than when you came here," said Roger O'Mally, appearing in his ordinary dress.

"I wasn't talking to you, O'Mally. You prob-

ably don't know what good grub is!" retorted Osborne.

"Don't I?" asked O'Mally, coolly. "Maybe not. But I *do* know that a *gentleman*—that's a word you're very fond of—doesn't grumble about food behind people's back. If the grub doesn't suit you, why don't you go to Professor or Mrs. Grigg? I would, if I had anything to say."

"If I had my clothes on, I'd settle *you*!" Osborne called out. "By the way, Bently, you let me in when your box comes, and I'll divide. My aunt always puts a bottle of champagne in my box."

"Oh, yes!" O'Mally said, ironically, "and a tall hat. Don't divide, Bently,—you'll get all the froth."

"I've half a mind" — Osborne began, but O'Mally had left the room,—“I've half a mind to challenge that fellow.”

Jack laughed out, behind the curtain of his dressing-box. Osborne said nothing.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Bob. "I think we are in trouble enough without going further. I'm sure *I* don't want any more fights."

"Ah! what can they do to you?" said Osborne, scoffingly. "They can only expel you. My aunt wouldn't care whether I was expelled or not. She'd say to me: 'Steve, that's a bad school. Old Grigg can't be a gentleman.' And

then she'd take me to the theatre, and put me at some place where I could have a good time."

Jack laughed again. Unluckily, Faky Dillon, who had no business in the senior barrack, came in search of a baseball glove that he had lent O'Mally. He listened to Osborne, a broad grin on his face, and then he softly sang:

"He's no Boston man,—mind that;
For he's talking through his hat!"

Faky picked up the glove and ran. Jack laughed out; he could not help it.

The long barrack was filled with sunshine. On two sides were rows of curtained boxes, where the students kept their uniforms, baseball and football suits, and their rowing things. Between every second box there was a big window draped with the American flag. The floor was bare. At the top and bottom of the room were stacks of muskets and pyramids of swords, as well as the fifes and drums of the corps. In front of each box was a low stool, on which the occupant might sit while he put on his shoes and socks. Osborne, turning rapidly, knocked over his stool, and at once came to the conclusion that Faky, in running out, had pushed it from under him. It was beneath his dignity to take notice of the verses, but here was a cause of offence.

"I'll break that little cad's neck," he called

out, "if I catch him! I must say, Bently, your kid friends don't seem to have been particularly well brought up."

Bob did not answer.

"That Dillon brute has insulted me. Somebody has to give me satisfaction."

"*I* will," said Jack. "Faky Dillon is my friend. He's under my care. And if you choose to get mad because a little fellow is saucy, you can take it out of me."

"What did he knock over my stool for?"

"He didn't."

Jack emerged from his box; Osborne, comb and brush in hand, did the same.

"I demand satisfaction."

"You can have just as much of it as you like when Professor Grigg is through with me for the other fight."

Osborne puffed out his chest and looked scornfully at Jack.

"Do you know who I am?" he asked, in a hoarse whisper. "I am the grandson of a New England pirate of noble descent. I must have blood!"

"You say much more," said Jack, "and I'll bring it out of your nose."

"You shall not insult me again. A friend of mine will wait on you. I choose swords. Tonight one of us shall meet his fate."

Osborne stalked out of the room.

“What does he mean?” Jack asked. “I say, Bob, he has been reading too many dime novels.”

“Not at all!” answered Bob. “He is a gentleman; he has a friend at a German college, and they settle rows with pistols or steel. He is in earnest.”

“He doesn’t think that I am going to do such a wicked thing. He’s not such a fool!” said Jack, amazed. “I suppose I’m born to get into scrapes. Mr. Mallony told me that you and I are summoned to Professor Grigg’s study at four o’clock. If he’d expel us, it would break my mother’s heart. An expulsion is a black mark against a boy all his life. I’ll tell Professor Grigg about Steve Osborne’s nonsense. He’ll get himself expelled.”

“You can’t tell,” said Bob, gloomily. “The boys would be down on you. They hate a boy that tells. You shouldn’t have provoked Steve. He has an indulgent aunt that worships the ground he walks on, and he has pirate blood in his veins. If we had something to give him, he might forgive you. He forgives very easily, if you take him the right way.”

Jack buttoned his collar carefully, for fear that he should lose his temper.

“You’ve changed, Bob!” he exclaimed; “changed! I thought you’d stick by me. I don’t care, though. If you think I’m going to let any pirate walk over me, you’re mistaken,—that’s all!”

The bell rang. In a few minutes Jack and Bob were toiling over their algebra; and Faky, Thomas Jefferson, and Baby were engaged in the reading class.

Jack looked out the window as Mr. Mallony expounded the mysteries of the Y's and X's, and sighed. He wished with all his heart that Bob had not changed. He thought of Miss McBride with affection. After all, what were the small afflictions of her rule to the prospect of a duel? Whom should he consult? Father Mirard? No: it would seem like telling. Miley? No: Miley would rush in and make things worse. Oh, if little Guy Pierre had only come! There was Roger O'Mally; he was a new friend,—that was the only thing against him.

A Latin class followed the algebra. Then there was a half hour's *cong e* before tea. Jack made at once for Roger, who had gone to an open space at the end of the campus to practice with quoits,—his set being the only one in the school.

“O'Mally,” said Jack, touching his shoulder, “I want your advice.”

“You'd better go to your friend, Bently,” answered O'Mally, coldly.

“All right!” said Jack. “I would if I could, for he's the best fellow in the world; though Steve Osborne's got him now.”

“I like your spirit,” said O'Mally, balancing his quoits. “What do you want?”

“Osborne has challenged me to fight a duel.”

O'Mally grinned.

“I suppose he's told his club that he would make you welter in your blood,—I know him. Are you going to fight?”

“I've never heard of such a thing. It's wrong,” said Jack. “I admit that I'd like to blacken his eye, if I thought that I wouldn't have to tell it in confession ——”

“Nonsense! It would be your duty to blacken Osborne's eye,” said O'Mally, “if you had good cause. We had an Austrian boy at our school abroad, and he was always talking about duels. He was a Catholic, too. I don't see how he could have done it. As for Osborne—I wish he wasn't here,” O'Mally continued. “He is forever making mischief. Faith, are you expecting a box?”

“Yes,” said Jack,—“and a good one.”

“You might buy him off. If you fed him, he wouldn't want to fight you.”

“No,” said Jack. “I'll fight him first.”

“But you can't. It's a mortal sin to fight a duel. That's in theology,” said O'Mally. “I'm going to be a Jesuit some day, and I have to look up these things. It's all in the intention.”

“A mortal sin?” asked Jack, his cheeks paling.

“That's the ticket!” said the young theologian, watching him closely. “You'll have to tell

him that he can have half your next box for his club. He'll be as sweet as pie."

"I'll not do it!" said Jack. "I'll go"—here his voice broke, as he saw himself in his imagination, blood running from various holes in his body—"and let myself be slashed to pieces. I won't hit back; I'll let him carve me. Then Bob will be sorry for having taken up with that Osborne."

O'Mally laughed; Jack looked at him reproachfully.

"Oho! What's this?"

Miley Galligan handed Jack a folded piece of paper. He opened it, and read:

"Master Stephen Osborne will send his second to arrange with Master J. Chumleigh. Master J. Chumleigh will please name a friend. Swords. To-night, in the apple orchard, at nine o'clock. Blood!"

Jack gave the note to O'Mally.

"I'm your man!" said O'Mally.

"Let me read it," said Miley.

"All right!" Jack answered, giving Miley the note.

Miley began a sort of war-dance.

"It's great!" he said. "It's like the juel in 'The Fakir of Broadway; or, Why He Killed Him.' I don't think he's spelled 'blood' right. I've always spelled it 'b-l-u-d.' It's more terrible like."

XVII.

JACK'S SECOND.

MILEY'S outburst was met with silence. O'Mally looked uncomfortable. He was having second thoughts.

"I don't know, Jack, whether I can help you or not," he said. "The whole thing is foolish or bad. Duelling is a sin, so is prize-fighting. If Steve Osborne means to hurt you, the thing's bad, and I'll not have anything to do with it. Besides, it's no fun to sneak out at nine o'clock, and perhaps be caught."

"He can't mean it," answered Jack. "He's just trying to frighten me."

"Not at all," said O'Mally. "He thinks it is a fine thing to fight."

"But suppose we killed each other?" asked Jack, aghast. "Or he killed me?"

"His honor would be satisfied," said O'Mally. "You'll have to excuse me, Jack. I'm against this sort of thing. You just write to him and tell him that he talks nonsense, and that you'll not be mixed up in such foolishness."

"I'll go and tell him for you," said Miley. "He is over there playing pitch-and-catch with John Betts. There's fire in his eye."

“I could go and tell Mrs. Grigg, and stop it all,” said Roger O’Mally; “but the boys would find it out and lead me a dog’s life. You’ll have to drop out of it some way.”

“If it is a sin to fight a duel, I’ll *not* fight,” said Jack. “I can’t tell, because the boys will call me a sneak. If I back out, everybody will believe that I am a coward. I wish I knew what to do.”

O’Mally stood with his hands in his pockets; he had no advice to offer.

“If it wasn’t a sin, would you like to fight him?” asked Miley, insidiously.

“Yes, I would,” said Jack, his eyes flashing. “I’d like to teach him a lesson. I wouldn’t hurt him much; but I’d cut a little triangle out of him, to show him that I’m not afraid.”

“Aha!” chuckled Miley, grinning. His eyes fairly twinkled; his head, barely visible above the big “sweater” he wore, nodded and bobbed. “You’re not afraid of him, are you?” he asked, softly. “I thought you were at first. You’d chew him up if he gave you much sass, wouldn’t you?”

“Yes, I would,” said Jack, his temper rising. “Talk about swords! You should see my uncle fence. He taught me. If it wasn’t wrong, I’d settle Steve Osborne.”

“I’d like to settle Steve Osborne myself, if I was big enough,” said Miley. “He’s a bad egg,

and the other fellows are afraid of him. Look—they don't dare come near us. Isn't that mean?"

This was true. Steve Osborne had obtained control over most of the seniors. They were not fond of him: he overawed them by his apparent knowledge of the world, and they were afraid of his sneers.

"O'Mally, stay with Jack," Miley said. "We'll show them he has some friends. The bell will not ring for a while yet; I'll just go up and try to bring him to his senses."

Jack and O'Mally resumed the game of quoits in silence. Miley, with his bicycle cap back on his head, marched toward Steve, who had ceased to play ball, and was now the centre of an admiring group.

"I can't drink more than three bottles of beer, you know," he was saying, "without its going to my head, and ——"

"Halloo, Osborne!" called Miley. "We know all about that. I want to talk to you."

There was silence. Miley's manner of addressing Osborne was looked on as a grave impertinence. Osborne's little court watched anxiously to see what the great personage would do.

"Do you want your head blown off before you know where you are, kid?" asked Osborne.

"Not particularly," answered Miley. "I don't want any foolish talk. I've come to represent Jack Chumleigh."

“Oh! you have, have you?” Osborne glanced scornfully at Miley, and then turned to his neighbors. They all broke into laughter.

Miley grinned pleasantly.

“I want to say that Jack thinks you’d better not fight with swords.”

“When *I* fight, I fight like a gentleman,” said Steve, straightening himself up. “I don’t back out. But if Jack Chumleigh will give up all the spending money he has to the club, and promise us the first chance at his box when it comes, I’ll say nothing more.”

Bob Bently stepped back. He did not like this. He felt that he ought to stand up for his friend. There were at least fifteen boys around Steve, apparently all in sympathy with him. John Betts, who, like Miley, had recently been promoted to the senior department, stopped catching his ball and looked indignant. The rest laughed; and one boy said in a loud tone, so as to be heard by Steve:

“That’s Osborne every time!”

Osborne condescended to smile at the champion. Bently was heartily ashamed of himself, and his shame turned to anger as he saw the eyes of Miley and John Betts fixed on him.

“It isn’t their business,” thought Bob, “if I don’t speak up for Jack. Let Jack depend on his new friend, O’Mally.”

The boys closed around Miley.

"There'll be fun!" whispered Riley. "See how Steve will eat up this little shaver!"

"Fair play!" called out John Betts, coming close to Miley.

Bob would have given a great deal to have followed his example, but Steve Osborne's satirical eye was on him. He did not move.

"Well," said Miley, smiling with much sweetness, showing the large piece of gold which had replaced a front tooth knocked out at football, "I'm here to talk, and I'm *going* to talk. And Mr. Steve Osborne can't frighten *me*," he added, with a glance at Bob. "There are folks here that seem to me to be mighty white-livered."

Several boys made a rush at Miley.

"Stand off!" cried John Betts.

"Oh, let 'em come!" Miley said, calmly. "I'll leave my marks on *somebody*. Let 'em come! You won't? No? Well, I know what I am going to say is in confidence. And if Professor or Mrs. Grigg hears it, it will be one of yous that will tell, and I'll find out who it is. This is a sacred confidence. 'Around you,' as Richeloo says in the play, 'I draw the secret circle of the truth.' Do you mind that? Well, I have come to say this: Mr. Osborne there wants to fight a juel with swords—to-night."

Osborne straightened himself.

"It needn't take place," he said, "if Jack

Chumleigh will make the proper terms. That's the decision of the club."

"It is!" said Riley.

"It is! It is!" responded the other members of the club.

"Done!" said Miley, sticking his fingers into the armholes of his sweater and assuming a noble attitude. "My principal will not make terms. Either Jack Chumleigh or Steve Osborne is got to lead this school, and we're going to decide it to-night. Are ye all good men and true?"

Riley almost bent double with laughter. The rest, except Bob, joined in; even Betts roared at Miley's impudence. Miley simply winked.

"On similar occasions," said Miley, calmly, "I have seldom embrued my hands in blood, though I could tell you little things that might change the shape of your faces. What I want to say is in the way of a warning. Jack Chumleigh's grandfather wasn't a pirate, but Jack's uncle is the champeen fencer of the United States. And he's taught Jack until Jack is as fine as a hair. Is this true, Bob Bently? Didn't Jack's uncle teach him how to use a sword?"

"A foil—yes," said Bob, reluctantly. "Jack has been well taught."

There was a movement among Steve's supporters.

"Personally," Miley continued, "I like fists. But when a boy challenges a gentl'man to a

game of bluff, I'm with the gentl'man 'every time,' as my noble friend on the right recently remarked. We won't give up our spending money; we won't divide our grub; but we'll fight it out. That is, I'm afraid that Jack, who can fence, might kill Osborne, and that would send his aunt in sorrow to the grave. *But*—hear me, gentl'men,—I will fight Steve with pistols at nine sharp. I don't say that I can shoot with him,—I have never knocked over more than ten stuffed figures in succession at Coney Island," said Miley, modestly; "and I'm a little out of practice. So I thought that Steve or some of his friends might fight me instead of Jack; because Jack's an expert, you know. He wouldn't kill Steve for the world."

"Professor Grigg ought to be told!" exclaimed Riley. "Miley Galligan is no better than a murderer."

"Oh, yes!" said Miley, "tell! But the man that tells will have to fight me to the bitter end. I will tr-r-r-r-ack him!"

John Betts turned away, to hide a grin. But Miley looked so much in earnest, and had such an air of assertion, that Steve Osborne's staff seemed uneasy.

"It wouldn't be right to tell," said Philip Burghey, a silent boy, who was too indolent to oppose Osborne.

"Yes, it would," retorted Riley, "if it is a

question of preventing bloodshed. Professor Grigg doesn't expect us to tell on one another, except where there is some injury or danger. These new boys are nothing better than blood-thirsty——”

Miley took a dingy pad from beneath his sweater, and wrote rapidly with the stump of a lead-pencil.

“What's your first name, Mr. Riley? I'll look after you when I've polished off Osborne,” he said. “I'm not much of a shot,” he added, with a sigh; “but I'll do my best. So you'll tell, will you? And you'll tell that Steve Osborne began it, hey? Will you? Of course you'll tell the truth. Oh, you'll tell!”

“Go it, Miley!” whispered John Betts, approvingly.

“Now,” said Miley, pulling up his sweater till it covered the tips of his ears, “here's our grand *finaly*,—the great song and dance at the end. Osborne will fight me or tell!”

“We were only in fun, anyhow,” said Steve, uneasily. “If you go and show Professor Grigg that note——”

“Oh, come! No threats!” said Miley. “Will you fight or tell?”

“We just wanted to frighten Chumleigh,—that's all,” said Osborne. “He's a new boy, you know; and new boys have got to stand things.”

“Will you fight or tell?” repeated Miley.

Steve Osborne looked at his staff.

Riley and Philip Burghey and four others suddenly started a game of pitch-and-catch. Bob Bently felt more ashamed of himself and more angry with Miley than ever. But he did not move.

"I call this a nasty trick!" exclaimed Osborne, in a querulous voice. "A gentleman demands satisfaction and expects an apology, and writes a note in fun; and a lot of murderers come up to put him in a false position! I say, fellows, let's boycott them."

There was no reply.

"Now, I'll tell you what I'll do," said Miley. "I'll communicate with my principal, and ask him to take fifty cents from each member of the club, and half the grub-boxes of each one that gets a box at Thanksgiving. Is it a go?"

Steve Osborne, greatly flushed, turned to the circle around him. He consulted with them.

"And I'm to have my pick of the first turkey that comes?" added Miley.

"It's a mean trick," said Osborne,—“a mean, low-down, murderous trick; but have your way!”

He left his friends and walked off.

"Our honor is satisfied," said Miley, with dignity. "I say, fellows," he added, with a chuckle, "I don't think Osborne's grandfather was much of a pirate."

The bell rang.

XVIII.

GUY'S NEWS.

No sooner was it known that Miley had bearded the great Osborne in the very centre of the club than there was a sensation in the school. The startling rumor ran along the tables of the refectory, and in a very short time there was scarcely a junior who believed that Steve Osborne's grandfather had ever been a pirate. Three hours before he had been the idol of the school. His cleverness, his power in the athletic meetings, the great "runs" he had made on the "diamond" when he was in Boston, his muscle, his knowledge of the manual of arms, had been celebrated until they became more important facts in the minds of many of the boys than anything chronicled in history.

Mr. O'Connor, who sat at the head of one of the senior tables, caught rumors of the change, and he smiled. He was glad to see the influence of Steve Osborne broken; but he could not help saying to Professor Grigg that evening as he made his report:

"Taken singly, boys are good fellows. They have hearts, and they are loyal and open to sympathy; and I'm sure they'd rather do right

than wrong. But in crowds they are as unreasonable as men."

The professor awoke from a deep study.

"Oh, yes!—what did you say? Oh, yes! we must manage them in squads, just like machines. There is nothing like it. Look at that Osborne,—fine, manly fellow. By the way, Chumleigh and three or four other boys are reported for fighting in uniform. Look into it,—it's bad."

Mr. O'Connor promised, and later got their sentence from the colonel.

After supper Miley found Jack walking, by special permission, with Faky Dillon and Thomas Jefferson on the junior side. Mr. O'Connor had sent him to take a message to one of the juniors, and he stopped to congratulate Jack.

"Well, kid," he said, jocularly, "the juel's off. It's a cold day when Miley Galligan is bluffed."

"We don't talk slang in the juniors," said Faky, gravely. "You will discover that your miscellaneous conversation is uncomprehended in the higher circles of the school."

Miley opened his eyes.

"Don't you go jollying me, kid!"

"Being unable to discover what your ultimate intention is, I cannot investigate its meaning," answered Faky.

"It is incompatible with our mental hallucinations," said Thomas Jefferson, observing Faky's wink.

"What are you giving—" began Miley.

"Idioms we are capable of," said Faky. "Slang is obnoxious. The seniors may indulge themselves in such conversation, we have no use for it."

"I am with you!" said Thomas Jefferson.

"You'd better take that chewing-gum out of your mouth before you put on airs!" cried Miley, indignantly.

Faky and Thomas Jefferson laughed.

"You'd have fared better on our side," said Faky. "Father Mirard has asked us for dinner to-morrow night,—that is, the six best juniors. You're treated like men on this side."

"We *are* men on our side," said Miley. "I say, Jack, the juel's off. And we'll loot the club. They've got to give us a lot of money for not telling or not fighting. Steve's gone under. I've fixed him."

"How did you do it?" asked Faky, in admiration.

"As far as I am concerned," said Jack, "I don't want Osborne's money or anything of his or his friends. I want them to let me alone,—that's all."

"Osborne's a fraud," said Miley.

"I will say nothing against any boy behind his back," said Jack. "If I have ever done it, I'm sorry for it, and I'll never do it again. When I get a chance, I'll tell Osborne what I think before his face."

Faky and Thomas Jefferson looked at Jack with admiration, but they wanted to hear what Miley had to say.

“Osborne’s out, at any rate,” said Miley; “and I’m going to run this school. Any bad boy can fool a lot of good boys into following him, if he knows how. I’ll tell you why,” added Miley, linking his arms in Jack’s. “Boys can’t tell things: they have to keep a lot of things quiet; and the bad boy, if he can talk well, can make ’em believe all sorts of things that they can’t tell to older people. Boys suffer a great deal that way. I suffered myself when I was young.”

Faky uttered a shriek of laughter, in which Thomas Jefferson joined.

Miley turned his back to them.

“Cheer up, Jack!” he said.

“I just want to be let alone,” said Jack. “I’m thankful to you, Miley, for getting me out of the scrape, though I don’t know how you’ve done it. But I am not going to begin here by crowing over people or abusing them. I want to keep out of Steve Osborne’s way,—that’s all. I’ve been thinking it all over, and I’ve made up my mind to keep the rules and work—after Professor Grigg has settled with me for fighting in uniform.”

Miley was disappointed. He had expected Jack to be jubilant over the victory. But he found him inclined, as Miley said to himself, “to preach.”

Jack suddenly found himself deserted.

Faky and Thomas Jefferson were determined to hear Miley's account of the interview between Steve Osborne and himself. And while Jack walked around the campus he heard them talking and laughing.

"It's hard to be good," he said to himself. "Just because I try to be good, I lose my best friend, Bob Bently; and my own brother drops me to take up with Miley Galligan."

Jack walked hastily toward the seniors' ground, his hands behind his back. He could not help thinking that he was like Napoleon at St. Helena. He pitied himself very much, and there was some consolation in this.

Miley caught up with him.

"You don't mean to say that you're not going to loot Steve Osborne's club when their boxes come?" he inquired, seriously.

"Yes, I do."

"I call that mean," said Miley. "After all the trouble I've taken! That club would have broken us all up, if it could."

"If Osborne lets me alone, I'll let him alone," replied Jack. "After what I went through at home last year, I determined to do just what was near me, and never mind the rest. I haven't been here any time at all when things begin to bob up against me. I'm not going to meddle in other folks' affairs, or do anything to anybody."

Miley whistled.

“I am going to get what I can out of Osborne,” said Miley, firmly. “I don’t see why I shouldn’t run this department.”

The bell for study rang. The boys formed into ranks,—Jack pairing with Riley, in a very depressed state of mind.

On the following day the sentences were announced, and Jack found himself deprived of his pocket-money for two weeks, put on guard duty for a week, and presented with thirty demerits for fighting in uniform.

The week passed, and the Wednesday of another week came, and with it Uncle Mike and Guy.

Jack was thankful that he was not on guard duty the second week. Guard duty consisted in walking up and down on the bluff overlooking the railway during recess. There the soldier in punishment had a full view of all the sports going on, but he could not join in them. Nothing could be more exasperating. The others concerned in the fight were punished, too; but for some reason or other, Professor Grigg held Jack to be the greatest offender.

Jack bore his exile with patience. The demerits were hard to bear; for they meant suspension at Christmas, if they were not worked off by exemplary good conduct.

But when Guy came, Jack almost forgot all

his woes. Faky brought the news while Jack was playing a game of quoits with John Betts,—Mrs. Grigg had sent him. He did not wait for Jack to say anything, but rushed off like the wind to tell Baby Maguire and Thomas Jefferson.

Riley was passing; and, in his excitement, Jack called to him:

“Say, will you tell Bob Bently that Mrs. Grigg wants him?”

As Riley was on his way to the barrack, and Jack was in a great hurry to get to Guy, it was natural enough that he should give this message. Riley, however, was of Osborne’s club, and not anxious to be polite to Jack.

“Why don’t you tell Bob yourself? Isn’t he a friend of yours any more?” Riley demanded.

“I’m a friend of his, but I’m not sure whether he’s a friend of mine,” replied Jack. “If he likes your crowd better, I can’t help it. I’ll tell him myself,—you needn’t mind.”

“Oh, I’ll tell him!” cried Riley, as he mounted his wheel. “Bob,” he called out, “Mrs. Grigg wants to see you.”

“About what?” asked Bob, who was taking off his football clothes.

“Oh, I don’t know! Jack Chumleigh told me to tell you.”

“Why couldn’t he tell me himself?”

“He didn’t care to speak to you, I suppose.

He said that if you liked our crowd, we could keep you."

Bob flushed to the roots of his hair.

"He did, did he? Jack Chumleigh said that, did he? All right! If he doesn't want to speak to me, I guess I can do without him. Why, Riley, you don't know what friends we have been. So he won't speak to me? All right!"

Riley was delighted. He was a narrow-minded and selfish boy. He wanted to be first with everybody. Steve Osborne managed him by constant flattery, and occasionally by bullying.

"You'll find out that old friends are not *always* the best," said Riley. "I could tell you other things Steve Osborne heard him say,—but you never mind. I'll stick up for you every time."

This did not give Bob much consolation. He got into his clothes and ran off toward the house. Jack was going up the steps as he reached them.

"Halloo, Bob!" Jack began, eagerly. But Bob straightened himself up, and went by without looking toward him.

Guy sat on the sofa in the smaller parlor, which was the special property of Mrs. Grigg, and into which the boys were seldom admitted. Mrs. Grigg and her youngest son, Timothy Grigg, were seated on either side of Guy; and it was evident that they were both interested in him. Opposite to them, bolt-upright on a chair, was

Uncle Mike. His tall hat, slightly out of date, but much polished with kerosene, was held stiffly in his hand. His frock-coat was new and black, and his cuffs were very prominent.

Faky and Thomas Jefferson and Miley, who stood near the sofa, beaming with delight, were proud of Uncle Mike.

“Mrs. Grigg can see,” whispered Miley to Faky, “that our relatives are no slouches.”

At this moment Uncle Mike added to the effect unconsciously by pulling out of his back pocket a crimson silk handkerchief, so rich and large that Miley could hardly restrain a whistle of admiration.

Nevertheless, Uncle Mike looked pale and worn. He seemed glad to see the boys,—very glad; but he sighed heavily as he greeted them.

“It does my heart good,” he said, with another sigh, “to find you all looking so round and rosy.”

Guy blushed and his eyes sparkled.

“O Jack! O Bob!” he said, holding a hand of each of them, “we’re in great trouble. Uncle Mike is ruined, and we don’t know what to do.”

XIX.

A WAY OUT.

No one spoke. Uncle Mike's hands trembled; and Mrs. Grigg, being a woman, thought of the most gracious and simplest thing possible: she took Uncle Mike's hat from him.

"Thank you, ma'am!" he said, gratefully. "Oh, thank you!"

The hat had been on Uncle Mike's mind, and Mrs. Grigg's politeness recalled him to himself.

"Everything is going to go," he said. "I hate to spoil our meeting with my cares and difficulties," he added, with a sigh; "but I know that my wife and I are dear to you all. You've been with us in joy, and you'll not desert us in sorrow."

The boys did not speak; their whole souls were intent on Uncle Mike.

"'Twas my foolishness in signing a note for a friend. Sure the boy was from the same place as myself, and I couldn't refuse. But he hasn't the money to pay, and all I've got must go. It's not for myself I mind, but for the old woman,—my wife, begging your pardon!"

Here Uncle Mike's voice broke.

Miley felt a lump in his throat.

"What makes it so hot in here?" he whispered angrily to Faky.

But Faky, seeing the moisture in his own eye reflected in Miley's, understood, and forbore to answer.

"I didn't intend to tell you at once," said Uncle Mike; "but Guy let it out. It's true, though, that soon we'll not have a roof over our heads; so I'm thankful Guy has come to school."

"You mustn't let your uncle talk any more, boys," said Mrs. Grigg, "until he gets a cup of tea."

"He's not *our* uncle," answered Baby Maguire; "he's ——"

"He's our uncle *now*," said Faky Dillon. "We'll adopt him; and," he added to Baby, in a hoarse whisper, "if you say he isn't, I'll settle with you,—that's all!"

Baby did not answer.

"Well, Uncle Mike," interposed Jack, "you just have your tea. Things are never so bad as they seem when we're tired after a long journey."

"I don't know, boys,—I don't know," said Uncle Mike, with a sigh. "The times are hard, too, or they'd be those that could help me. But there's always God between us and the door."

"We must find a way out," began Guy, solemnly. "M. Pierre is—I don't know where, so I can't appeal to him."

“We can sell our bicycles,” remarked Thomas Jefferson.

“Thank you, one and all!” said Uncle Mike; “but it wouldn’t help. No, boys. Let us be thankful that little Guy here is safe, with a roof over his head and plenty to eat.”

“I must scold you all,” said Mrs. Grigg, “for letting your uncle talk so much before he had his tea. Run, Timothy, and tell Mr. O’Conor that all these boys will have supper with their uncle in the little tea-room.”

“It’s very kind you are, ma’am,” said Uncle Mike, straightening himself with an effort; he had grown older and more careworn since the boys had last seen him.

For a time Jack and Bob forgot their misunderstanding. As they followed Uncle Mike and Mrs. Grigg to the tea-room, Jack had to speak.

“It’s awful, isn’t it, Bob?”

“I should say so. I wonder if your father or mine can help him?”

“I’m afraid not,” replied Jack. “I heard father say that things were all wrong this year, and he’d have a hard pull to keep us at school.”

“Cook will be in a bad way about this,” remarked Baby to Thomas Jefferson. “I suppose she’ll go and forget our box.”

Miley said nothing. His forehead was wrinkled up from thought; he shaped his mouth to whistle, and then restrained himself.

"I wonder if I could sell my collection of stamps for anything worth having?" said Faky, who looked very serious. "I wonder if I could?"

Thomas Jefferson had no time to answer; for he observed that there was pineapple jelly on the tea-table, and that Mrs. Grigg was saying grace.

Uncle Mike became more cheerful as the meal progressed, and the hectic flush of fatigue and nervousness died out of Guy's cheeks. Professor Grigg came in somewhat late. He had just finished writing his lectures on "The Pre-Accadians," and he created a sensation by attempting to drink from the sugar-bowl, and then, in confusion, seizing Bob's teacup just as if it were his own. Faky Dillon almost choked himself in trying to keep from giggling. Timothy Grigg gravely rose to his feet and set his father right.

"He is so absent-minded!" said Mrs. Grigg. "He is wrapped up at present in the pre-Adamite ages."

"Dear! dear!" said Uncle Mike, sympathetically. "I was never fond of them deep things myself. They do be bad for the mind. We all have our own troubles, ma'am," he added.

Mrs. Grigg smiled without understanding Uncle Mike's sympathy.

"No, dear," she said to her husband across the table, "*that* is not salt, it's pepper."

But the pre-Accadians had done their work,

and Professor Grigg had blackened his lettuce with pepper.

“May I ask,” said the professor, when he had sneezed several times, and Timothy had found another plate for him, “if the relative of my young friend believes that the classics rather than mathematics should be the basis of education?”

Faky Dillon observed Uncle Mike’s embarrassment, and he responded at once to his whisper:

“Answer for me, boy. Them that learning makes mad you must humor.”

Now, Professor Grigg was simply being polite; his thoughts were with the pre-Accadians, and his eyes fixed on vacancy.

“I think,” spoke up Faky—and his impudence made Bob and Jack shudder,—“that the Roman Empire merely existed that we might learn to know and love the Latin tongue.”

“Remarkable! remarkable!” said Professor Grigg, waking up. “I made the same remark to the juniors the other day, and I am pleased, sir, that, by an unconscious concord of minds, we have come to the same conclusion. I am delighted to meet you at my table, sir. We shall have a conversation after tea on the Horatian metres, with which you are no doubt familiar.”

Uncle Mike blushed to the roots of his hair. Timothy Grigg resolved that he would “do” Faky Dillon for this, and Mrs. Grigg pretended not to notice the episode.

Jack tried to engage Uncle Mike in conversation, so that Professor Grigg might be warded off; but the professor, waking up again, determined to be polite.

“I may observe, my dear friend, that life must have been at its best when everywhere one heard the sonorous Latin tongue about one.”

Uncle Mike blushed deeply and looked unhappy.

“I don’t see how the old Romans had time for any work, if they had to tinker over the declensions and conjugations,” said Faky, frankly. “It must have been a great waste of time.”

Professor Grigg awoke in earnest.

“You surprise me, sir,” he said, stiffly. “By the way, Mrs. Grigg, you have not presented me to our guest.”

“It’s Uncle Mike,” put in Faky; “and he doesn’t care about Latin,—he’s in the grocery business.”

“Oh!” said Professor Grigg. “I found his first remark so appropriate that I fancied he was interested in pedagogics.”

“No, thank you,” said Uncle Mike, modestly; “I am not acquainted with them.”

After this Professor Grigg was silent; he withdrew from the world about him, and returned, in his mind, to his beloved Accadians and Scythians.

Guy was eager to begin work at once. He

confided to Jack that he had determined to become a great artist or write books.

"Of course," he said, "I never intend to be a poet, like Faky, you know. You have to be a genius to be that. But as soon as I get my education, I shall try to make money for Uncle Mike; so I'd like to begin at once."

He was strong enough to go to the classes, and during the recess time he sat under a tree at the edge of the campus and watched the other boys play. Uncle Mike, who had come to spend three days, stayed with him.

On the evening of the second, before the study bell rang, the boys had a serious talk over Uncle Mike's misfortune. Bob had discovered that the debt which was hanging over him amounted to about two thousand dollars. Uncle Mike had still three weeks in which to raise it. Jack and Bob, forgetting their coldness for the present, argued over ways and means. Thomas Jefferson suggested that Faky should collect his poems, to sell them for the benefit of Uncle Mike. To which Faky, instead of growing angry, replied :

" Envy is green
As the leaf on the tree,
So don't you go poking
Such jokes upon me."

"Don't be worrying, boys," Uncle Mike said, after the heated debate was done. "It's little

good you can do me. The wife and I must just begin over again,—though it's a cozy place we have, and 'twill go hard to part with it."

"I'm afraid we can't be of much use," replied Jack, with a sigh.

"Something may turn up," said Uncle Mike. "There's no telling; though I don't see much chance of it. Still, God's always between us and the door."

"We can do *one* thing," observed Guy, suddenly speaking from his seat on the grass at the side of the campus: "we can pray. And if we pray hard enough, God will give us what we ask. I *know* that."

Nobody spoke. In fact, none of them seemed to take any notice of Guy's words, except Uncle Mike.

"I'm not expecting a miracle, Guy," he answered.

"Oh, St. Joseph can ask God to help you without a miracle!" said Guy. "I always think that St. Joseph understands us better than most saints. He was poor himself, and he knows what we need."

Jack and Bob resolved that they would pray with all their might, but they did not speak about it.

On the next afternoon the smaller boys were permitted to go to dine with Father Mirard. Before knocking at the priest's little white door,

Faky and Miley and Thomas Jefferson excused themselves, leaving Baby alone on the doorstep. Faky said he thought he would run round the block; Miley remarked that he guessed he would see how the numbers ran on the other side of the street; and Thomas Jefferson declared that he must find out whether the blue streak at the end of the avenue was the river or the sky.

Baby grumbled, but waited. Faky waited until the others were out of sight, and entered the little chapel. He knelt in the aisle, out far from the ruby-like flame before the Tabernacle, and prayed with all his heart that something might happen to save Uncle Mike. He heard a thumping noise behind him, and he turned for a moment. There was Miley Galligan beating his chest as if it were a drum, and praying with great fervor; and farther down in the church was Thomas Jefferson, his face buried in his hands. This gave Faky firm confidence that all was not lost; and a way out would be found by God.

The three boys left the chapel together.

“Oh, God will do it, of course!” Miley said.
“He sees *we* can't do anything.”

By this time Baby had entered Father Mirard's house. The kind priest met the others at the door.

“Welcome!” he exclaimed, heartily, holding two letters in his hand. “My children,” he added, smiling, “I have good news for you.”

“We need it, Father,” answered Miley.

“Are these for me?” demanded Thomas Jefferson, taking the letters.

“Of course,” replied Father Mirard.

“To keep?”

“To keep,—to do as you please with.”

“Then,” said Thomas Jefferson, turning to the others, “Uncle Mike shall have his house.”

XX.

THE BOXES.

FATHER MIRARD was amused by the excitement of the boys, not understanding the cause of it. Timothy Grigg had entered last; he stood with his mouth wide open, amazed. And well he might be. Miley Galligan, having taken one long look at the stamps on the letters, bounded into the middle of the hall and began to sing the "Alabama Coon," accompanied by a double shuffle. Faky bent low and patted his knees in excellent time, and Thomas Jefferson yelled in unison; while Baby Maguire stood still.

"Boys! boys!" cried Father Mirard, imploringly. "My dear boys, you afflict me."

But who could be heard above this din? Miley's voice grew louder, and Thomas Jefferson joined in the clapping. Even Timothy Grigg assisted in the noise, and ran to the piano and gave an imitation banjo accompaniment.

Father Mirard put his hands to his ears, but he laughed; for he always had a great tolerance for the ways of the American boy. He did not understand them, but he enjoyed them. He was particularly fond of bad boys, and they knew it. The good boys, he declared, had many friends,

but the bad boy had no friends. He never showed any regard for Steve Osborne, because he disliked the pretentious and mean boy. He never hesitated to give the bad boy his opinion of him, but he always did it gently. When Billy Atkins borrowed Professor Grigg's best horse and scoured the county for a whole day, and blamed John Betts for the laming of the animal, Father Mirard had him down to tea. He knew that the quickest way to the juniors' confidence was through the cheerfulness caused by judicious feeling.

Billy Atkins had been as sullen as a bear with a sore head. He would not confess: he still declared that John Betts had harnessed the horse and told him that Mr. O'Connor wanted him to drive to Auburn for a package of books. John Betts, he said, had gone part of the way with him. Professor Grigg ruled that Atkins should go; John Betts, too, was under suspicion,—lightened, however, by his previous good conduct.

“My father will skin me when I get home,” he said, as he sat opposite to Father Mirard; “and mother—she'll just make herself sick crying over it. But I can't help it, Father Mirard. Nobody takes interest in bad boys except you, and I've always been a bad boy,—everybody *expects* me to be bad, and they haven't been disappointed,” added Atkins, with a faint laugh. “But I don't care!”

“Oh, yes, you do!” said Father Mirard, giving him another piece of cake. “You’re only pretending you don’t. How did you come to lame the horse?”

“He stuck his foot into a musk-rat hole,” replied Atkins. “I couldn’t help it. And then I was afraid to come home; and I just blamed it on John Betts, because nobody would believe that *he* could do anything bad. Oh, he’s Professor Grigg’s white-headed boy, he is! Oh, yes!—butter wouldn’t melt in *his* mouth. Oh, yes!—if you’re bad once in this school, people think you’re bad always. I suppose you’ll turn me out of the house too now, because you’ve made me tell you how bad I was.”

“Not at all,” Father Mirard replied, smiling. “I think your courage in telling me the truth has partly made amends for your badness. Now go to Professor Grigg and tell *him* the truth.”

“The professor won’t listen; he’ll *know* I am bad,—he only guesses at it now. I took his horse to have a good drive, and just to spite him for giving me six pages in the ‘*Historia Sacra.*’”

Billy expected Father Mirard to groan aloud at this revelation; he fixed his eyes on the priest’s face, ready to see it change color. Father Mirard looked grave.

“My dear Billy,” he said, “I wasn’t a very good boy myself; but I always told the truth, and I tried to be good after a time.”

"I won't go to Professor Grigg; I hate him," protested Billy, frankly. "But what bad things could *you* do? A French boy doesn't have much chance to be bad; he's caged up like a little girl. You might as well talk of a saint's being bad."

"St. Augustine was bad once. When he was a small boy—" and Father Mirard told Billy some episodes from St. Augustine's "Confessions."

"I feel better," said Billy; "and I just think my mother's as good to me as St. Monica was to St. Augustine. I'll just go and tell old—I mean Prof—I mean *Professor* Grigg. And if he turns me out, I'll come back to you."

Professor Grigg was induced to relent, and Billy Atkins began to be more manly at once. He always declared that Father Mirard had made him see what meanness was. Hence Billy was one of the six best juniors invited on this occasion,—Miley Galligan having been added from the seniors, because Father Mirard did not know of his promotion.

Billy entered, his newly-washed face somewhat soapy, but flushed with pleasure.

"Look!" said Thomas Jefferson, showing him the envelopes.

"Look!" cried Miley Galligan, ceasing to dance.

"Look!" called out Faky Dillon.

Billy examined the stamps attentively.

“Jimmy Pats!” he said, slowly; then he whistled. “You’re in luck! By golly! Mauritius of the first issue means big money. Jimmy Pats!”

“O Father, I beg pardon!” observed Faky, breathlessly. “But we wanted money for some poor people that will lose everything, and we couldn’t think of anything. There wasn’t any way out——”

“Not a way!” interrupted Miley.

“It seemed as though these poor people, who have been kind to little Guy, you know, would be turned out in the street. It is all because of notes or mortgages, or something of that kind. But Guy gave us a tip about praying, and we all went and prayed.”

“This is all very strange,” said the good priest; “I don’t understand. I give you some old stamps with pleasure,—yes. You dance and sing,—very well. You tell me about poor old people and little Guy and prayer. All I understand is that you did well to pray. Oh, yes! you did well to pray. Come, the omelette will be cold.”

The boys followed Father Mirard into the dining-room, where Madame Rossé, the old housekeeper, who spoke no English, met them with a beaming smile, and the hot omelettes and her famous fried potatoes.

After tea had begun, Faky, assisted by a

chorus, told Father Mirard that these Mauritius stamps were valuable.

Father Mirard shrugged his shoulders.

“They are yours, my boys,” he said; “I care not how valuable they are. Do as you will with them.”

“We were afraid that you might want them back again,” said Faky, frankly.

“Would that be like a Frenchman?” asked Father Mirard, reproachfully. He made them tell him all about little Guy and Uncle Mike and Mrs. McCrossin. And Faky told the story so well—every word of it came from his heart—that Billy Atkins was observed to wipe his eyes with his jacket sleeve, and Father Mirard said heartily :

“For the first time in my life I wish I were rich,—I do indeed !”

The sponge cake and custard and the tiny glasses of sweet cordial were brought in at this moment, and Billy whispered to Miley Galligan :

“Steve Osborne’s club has got three boxes. They’re locked in the trunk-room. And Steve is going to do you out of your share.”

“Is he ?” said Miley, eating his sponge cake. “He is ? Ah, ah ! Glad you told me. When Miley Galligan is left, dear child, the circumambient snow and frost will surprise the oldest inhabitant thereof,—and don’t you forget it !”

“No slang,” whispered Billy. “Father Mi-

rard is listening, and you know he doesn't like slang."

"The club has boxes, has it? And I'm to be left out, am I? All right!" said Miley, sarcastically. "A-a-ll right!"

For a time the supper drove all thoughts of the stamps from the minds of the boys. But Miley brooded over the perfidy of the club, and was so absent-minded that he went on eating after everybody else had finished.

Thomas Jefferson longed so earnestly to discover just how much the stamps on Father Mirard's letters were worth that he could not sing in the choruses or amuse himself in any way. He stood near the window of the little parlor, looking into the back yard while the boys were singing a rollicking college chorus. As he stood there he fancied he saw a figure cross the garden from the honeysuckle arbor to the willow-tree opposite. The twilight had begun to fall, but he recognized Steve Osborne. He wondered what he was doing there, but said nothing about him. He had put the precious stamps into an envelope given to him by Father Mirard. He took the envelope out, looked at it carefully, and then thrust it back into his jacket pocket. Miley noticed this and laughed.

"Why are you so silent?" asked Father Mirard, turning from the cheerful party at the piano.

“The stamps are on his mind,” said Miley. “If he had the Postage Stamp Guide, and could see just what they’re worth, he’d feel better.”

“So would I,” said Faky.

The housekeeper came in, and lighted the lamp on the centre table. The boys gathered about Thomas Jefferson and gazed at the stamps. One was orange-colored; the Greek head, with its fillet among the hair, plainly printed “Postage,” “Mauritius,” “Post office,” and “One penny,” was plainly discernible. Moreover, the post office people had not soiled the stamp.

“My brother,” explained Father Mirard, “intended to post that letter before he left Mauritius. He forgot, went on board the vessel with it in his pocket, and brought it to me himself. Poor, dear Fernand! he is dead now.”

The other stamp was blue, of the denomination of two pence.

“1848,” began Father Mirard, looking at the envelope from which Thomas Jefferson had taken the stamp. “Ah, yes! Fernand wrote that letter to me after he had gone home.”

Timothy Grigg had stolen out quietly, while the group was interested in the stamps. He now returned with a green-covered book.

“I knew Leo Martin had a ‘Guide,’ so I just slipped out to borrow it from him.”

Faky opened the book with trembling hands, and looked for “Mauritius.”

“Here,” he said, giving the volume to Timothy Grigg, “you find the place: I’m too nervous. Suppose we should be mistaken?”

“I hope not,” said Father Mirard, who was doubtful about the whole matter. “I hope not, for the sake of your poor people.”

The faces around the lamp were intent and earnest. Timothy found page 357, and read:

“1847. 1 A1 1p orange 2000.00.”

“Oh!” exclaimed all the boys.

It was a long-drawn-out “Oh,” meaning amazement, in Timothy Grigg’s mouth, and relief and gratitude in Faky’s and Thomas Jefferson’s.

“The other!” exclaimed Faky,—“find the other!”

Timothy looked at it eagerly.

“1848,” he replied, anxiously. “Two pence. It’s worth only fifteen dollars,—perhaps less, for it is cancelled.”

“I congratulate your good Uncle Mike,” replied Father Mirard, still doubtful. “If, however, your dream of the stamp is not realized, count on me to help you in any way I can. Your intention is good.”

“But, Father, the stamp is really worth two thousand dollars,” answered Faky, earnestly. “We shall sell it for that.”

“Come, let us sing,” said Father Mirard, who looked on all this as a piece of boyish nonsense;

and the boys burst into "The Spanish Cavalier," while he played the accompaniment.

"It makes a boy better to have a good time like that," Billy Atkins said on their way home. "I just *love* Father Mirard!"

Thomas Jefferson nodded his head. He kept his hand against his jacket pocket; for there was the precious stamp.

"I say," he broke out, "isn't that Steve Osborne? There he goes! Somebody jogged my arms."

Somebody had passed quickly, and leaped on a bicycle farther up the road. Miley saw that the "somebody" was Osborne.

XXI.

A DIALOGUE.

THE boys were sound asleep at a very early hour; for Father Mirard's little entertainments were not kept up late. The precious envelope was in Jack's possession. (Thomas Jefferson believed it to be safer with him.) He put it under his pillow carefully, and he awoke several times in the night to see whether it was safe or not.

Steve Osborne happened to be captain of the dormitory; for at Professor Grigg's school a great deal of responsibility was thrown upon the boys. It was forbidden to bring anything from without into the sleeping-room; and before Steve turned out the lights, he walked up to Jack and demanded what he had under his pillow.

"If it is whisky," Steve said, insolently, "you'll be expelled."

Jack's blood tingled at this insult.

"I don't belong to your club," he retorted. "You've made a mistake. I don't belong to a crowd that boasts of drinking and playing poker."

"What have you got there?"

Jack hesitated. According to the dormitory

rules, the captain of the week had a right to make such a demand; and if Jack did not comply, he could report him to Mr. O'Connor, which meant a serious charge against him to the governing committee.

"It's only an envelope, Mr. Osborne," answered Jack, showing the precious piece of paper.

"A check from your millionaire papa, I suppose!" said Osborne, with a sneer.

"I don't propose to discuss my father with *you*. And I tell you this," added Jack, flaring up. "To-morrow you'll be like anybody else on the campus. You can't put on airs when Miley Galligan comes to you and wants his share of the boxes."

"What boxes?" asked Osborne.

"Oh, *I* know!" said Jack. "Miley told me as we were coming upstairs."

"Miley! Does *he* know?" said Osborne, off his guard. "I don't see what right he has with the seniors. I believe that Mr. O'Connor found him too 'tough' to be let go among the juniors."

Osborne had made a good guess at the truth, and Jack was very indignant; he was always intensely loyal to his friends.

"You're a mean—" he began.

"No talking!" Osborne said, assuming his military air. "I'll report you if you don't keep quiet."

Jack ground his teeth and turned over on his pillow. He hated to obey anybody, but to have to obey Steve Osborne!—it was too much. And yet it was a good lesson for him; for that night he learned for the first time that there was a principle in obedience behind the person that exacted it.

Suddenly the lights went out; Jack said a little extra prayer, and went to sleep with the precious envelope in his hand. In the night a breeze blew through the yellow vine leaves that clustered over the window, and the envelope fluttered to the floor. It was Jack's first thought when he awoke. He picked it up, and laid it away carefully in the bottom of his jacket pocket, resolving to send the stamps to the great dealer in New York at noon.

The morning was a busy one. There was a longer drill than usual; then came the announcement of additional orders, and of the appointment of a new set of officers. Jack was reported by the colonel because there was a spot on his belt, and Miley ordered to guard duty because he had forgotten his bayonet. The colonel was in a bad humor, and the morning was hot in more ways than one. Uncle Mike admired the drill very much; and Guy, as he sat on a bench watching the boys, wished with all his heart that he could carry a musket.

It was a bad morning for Jack: everything

seemed to go wrong. As he was leaving the campus, the colonel noticed that he had worn his right shoe heel very unevenly, and publicly commented on his slovenliness and "unsoldierly lack of neatness." To make matters worse, Jack heard Steve Osborne, in his report of the dormitory, mention Bob Bently's name as first on the list for good conduct. Jack was not sorry to hear Bob praised, but that Bob should be praised by Steve Osborne filled him with rage. He fancied, too, that Bob, who had imitated Osborne's "West Point waist" and was very correct, laughed as the colonel reprimanded him.

"For nothing!" Jack said, as he dressed in his ordinary clothes. "Just as if it was a great fault to have one's heels uneven. I wasn't brought up to be a dude."

As he dressed, Jack consoled himself by imagining that he was in a position to give the colonel and Steve Osborne a piece of his mind; and he gave it to them—in his mind! How sarcastic he was! How Osborne wilted under his shower of brilliant arrows! He ended by sending his despised heels to the shoemaker's at once.

"Ah!" said the colonel, as he passed Jack, who drew his heels together with a click and made the usual salute, "you can take a hint."

"A hint, colonel!" said Jack. "I think it was a bludgeon."

"Boys need a bludgeon sometimes," returned the colonel, smiling amiably.

And all of a sudden Jack found himself in a very good humor. He was glad that he had put on his new shoes, and he wondered how he could have endured those uneven heels.

The classes were "on," as the boys said, for three hours. In his struggle to keep his average in the algebra class, Jack forgot all about everything else. At the short recess before dinner, he secured permission to go over to the juniors' campus.

Uncle Mike, Guy, Baby Maguire, Faky Dillon, and Thomas Jefferson were comfortably seated under a big apple-tree. As Jack approached, Faky said:

"The hero comes
Without fife or drums;
Without a rocket,
But in his pocket —"

Excuse me! My inspiration isn't on ice to-day. I'll polish that up later."

"They've been telling me," said Uncle Mike, shaking hands with Jack, "that they're going to keep the roof over the old woman and myself. I don't understand it, and I can hardly believe it; but I'm *that* grateful—" Uncle Mike broke off; there was a suspicious tremble in his voice. "I hope it's true."

"Of course it is true," put in Guy, his eyes

sparkling. "Everybody knows that the Mauritius stamps of the right issue are worth mints of money."

Before Jack could answer, Miley Galligan came up and touched his shoulder.

He answered Jack's look of surprise by saying: "Oh, I don't go on guard until to-morrow! And of course while Uncle Mike's here I am entitled to a little *cong e*. Look here, Jack! I want to see you."

"All right!"

Miley linked his arm into Jack's with an air of great importance, and drew him away from the group under the tree.

"News!" said Faky, in a loud whisper. "The Bowery is burned up, and Miley has just heard the news."

Miley turned to throw a look of scorn at the scoffer.

"Jack," he said, "I've found the club's boxes. They're under the stairway in the trunk-room, hidden under a lot of straw. And I'm not going to be cheated. Osborne thinks that nobody can find them; he's a cute one! He said just a moment ago, so that I could hear: 'My aunt has sent me a box, but nobody knows it. There's champagne in it.' He did it just to aggravate me. *His* box is not among those under the stairway. They'll be opened to-night, or the things will spoil; and I'm going to open them."

“I don’t think that it would be right,” replied Jack.

“Look here, Jack, you haven’t lived in the world much. *I* have. A bargain is a bargain. I made my terms. What then? Gimme my pound of turkey?” added Miley, striking an attitude.

“Well, I don’t want their old turkey,” said Jack.

“But *I* do. And, then, think of the principle of the thing, and the pickles—oh, the pickles! I wish I could find Steve’s aunt’s box. I wouldn’t drink wine—mom made me promise *that*,—but I’ll bet it’s a boss box. I wish I could find it.”

“I don’t care,” said Jack. “We’ll soon have a box of our own.”

“But, you know, *the principle* of the thing!” urged Miley.

“I don’t see much principle in looking into another fellow’s box.”

“Oh, you don’t! That’s because you’re a greeny. Now, Mumford is the captain of our dormitory for this week,—he was appointed to-day. He is near-sighted. All we’ll have to do will be to sneak out. I’ll get the key of the trunk-room.”

“No,” persisted Jack, firmly.

“No! Well, you are idiotic,—just a chump. Don’t you want to see the club checkmated?”

“No. Let ’em alone!”

“Not on your birthday!” said Miley. “I am going to run this school. My grandfather wasn’t a pirate, but my father was one of the men that ran New York, and you just remember it; and if you want to run this school with me, just you say so.”

“I don’t,” said Jack. “I have enough to do to manage my own business.” And he turned to join Uncle Mike.

“Stop!” said Miley. “Do you know what Steve Osborne will think if we don’t make good the threat I made to loot the boxes? He and Bob Bently will have a good time laughing at you,—of course they’ll laugh.”

Jack’s face became red. Miley saw that his words had told.

“Look here! I went into your quarrel—I settled the thing for you,—and now you go and back out. I don’t blame Bob Bently and Steve Osborne for having a good time laughing at you,—I don’t blame them! Did you see how everybody laughed when the colonel let out on you about your heels this morning? Steve just howled.”

Poor Jack’s heart became very bitter.

“Say!” Miley continued,—“say! think of the club when it finds that you are not afraid of it, anyhow! And we’ll find Osborne’s aunt’s box. He says that it’s full of things that will keep till Thanksgiving, so he’s not giving anything away.

That makes all the boys anxious to give him things now. He's a dandy! And, say, there must be good things in that box; for his aunt's a millionaire."

"That's easily understood," answered Jack, with a touch of scorn. "It's natural enough for people related to pirates to have lots of money. Nobody would speak to such folks in Philadelphia."

"I'm not talking of his grandfather,—the aunt's got the cash, and Steve's box must be scrumptious. There are lots of the fattest kind of sardines in it, I'll bet; and I heard Steve talking to Bob about the sausages his aunt always sends. I shouldn't wonder if there would be imported ginger-ale in the box."

"Steve doesn't spend so much money himself,—he's stingy."

"He treats Bob Bently occasionally. They will have great fun drinking that imported ginger-ale and laughing at you. I can hear 'em myself. 'Ain't Jack Chumleigh soft?' I can hear Bob Bently saying. 'You can be as nasty as you like to him, and he won't resent it. He's a rag-baby.'"

"Bob wouldn't say that!" exclaimed Jack, growing very angry.

"Wouldn't he?" asked Miley, whistling long and knowingly. "Oh, he wouldn't! No!—oh, no! He's a daisy!"

Jack gripped Miley's arm.

"If I thought Bob Bently would talk that way, I'd ——"

"Are you going to whisper all day?" demanded Faky from under the apple-tree.

"I must go!" Jack said. "I tell you, Miley, I'll settle Bob's laughing at me. I'm with you to-night."

Miley whistled triumphantly, and, with a wave of his hand to Uncle Mike, he started in haste back to the other campus.

"The stamps! the stamps!" Thomas Jefferson said, impatiently. "Show them to Uncle Mike. We've got to send them off to-day."

Jack drew out the envelope; he put his thumb and forefinger carefully into it, and then opened it as wide as he could. There were no stamps there!

All the boyish faces turned white.

"Gone!" said Jack, faintly.

"This is Steve Osborne's work," added Faky. "I know it is. Don't cry, Guy."

XXII.

STEVE OSBORNE.

THE sound of the next bell fell on very unhappy ears. It was Uncle Mike's opinion that much had not been lost; but, nevertheless, he sympathized deeply with the distress of his young friends. Dinner was a very sad meal. Jack could touch nothing, and Baby's appetite alone was normal.

After dinner our friends gathered near the seniors' campus again,—the juniors in the group being permitted to go beyond their limits because of Uncle Mike's visit.

Miley's forehead was crinkled. Guy sat, with his hand in Uncle Mike's, disconsolate. Jack and Bob were apart, each wanting to speak, but neither caring to speak first.

"Steve Osborne took those stamps!" Thomas Jefferson said at last. "I know he did."

"I think so, too," added Faky Dillon, with a defiant look at Bob Bently.

"You must not say so," Guy put in. "You dislike him, and we are always wrong when we find fault with those we dislike,—always!"

"With whom are we to find fault, then?" Faky demanded, in amazement.

“With nobody!” said Guy, decidedly.

“I should like to know why you blame Steve Osborne for the loss of those stamps?” said Bob Bently. “Just because Steve’s a gentleman, you encourage all these little kids to have a pick at him.”

“I don’t think he’s a gentleman; and if he wants a scrap, just tell him Miley Galligan is his man.”

“This is no time for scraps,” said Bob. “And, if I were you, I wouldn’t tackle a man twice my size. Steve Osborne’s a friend of mine; he has been accused of theft, and I’ve got to stand up for him.”

“That is right,” observed Uncle Mike. “Don’t let anybody find fault with a friend of yours behind his back,—don’t you do it!”

“He’s a very new friend,” said Jack, sarcastically, turning his back to Bob.

“I don’t believe he stole the stamps,” Bob went on. “Old friends are sometimes less kind than new friends.”

“New friends bring champagne and cigars and poker chips to their *new* friends. Oh, yes, I understand!”

Guy looked pained, and Uncle Mike very much puzzled.

“But we must find the stamps,” said Miley. “I’ll just go and threaten him.”

Faky Dillon smiled.

“Fists don’t count in this. We’ve got to go to work with brain. I think Steve stole those stamps because—because—why, he was hanging around Father Mirard’s house last night,—listening, I believe,—just listening to see what he could hear.”

“I decline to notice such assertions,” said Bob, straightening himself. “A man of honor disdains the ——”

“Oh, yes, you got that out of a book!” replied Faky. “Now, you look here. What was Steve doing last night? We saw him sneak ahead of us and get on his wheel.”

“I don’t know and I don’t care,” said Bob. “He wasn’t trying to steal stamps. He doesn’t want money,—his aunt just pours it on him.”

“The stamps are gone, and I am sure that he took them,” persisted Faky.

“All this is wrong,” said Guy, raising his voice and trying to make himself heard above the clash of tongues. “Nobody saw Steve Osborne take the stamps.”

“Well, they’re gone, anyhow,” said Faky; “and he is the only boy mean enough to take them.”

“You don’t know anything about detective work,” said Miley. “The way to catch the offender is not to put his friends on guard.”

“Oh, *I* don’t read detective stories!” answered Bob, scornfully.

Miley's face flushed. This was a hard blow ; for only recently he had received severe admonitions from the authorities on this subject.

"I shall track Steve Osborne, however," he went on. "Of course, Bob, you'll tell him that I am after him."

"Oh, no!" said Bob, scornfully. "Oh, no! I wouldn't insult him that way."

"Look at the evidence," said Faky. "The stamps are in an envelope in Father Mirard's room. We talk about them,—good! The windows are open,—good! Steve Osborne prowls about,—bad! He hears what we say,—bad! And the stamps disappear,—worst of all!"

"Osborne came last night to find out what I had under my pillow," said Jack.

"More evidence!" answered Faky.

"But if he took the stamps from Father Mirard's, he couldn't have got them again from under Jack's pillow, could he?" asked Guy. "Were the stamps in the envelope when you went to bed, Jack? Did you *see* them?"

"I am sure they were there,—they *must* have been!"

"Do you remember seeing them?"

"I am not sure whether I looked at them or not,—I think I did. I know so well what the Mauritius stamp is like that I can't say whether I actually saw the stamps or not. I was sleepy, too."

“You’re no good as a witness,” said Miley. “If you’re not sure that the stamps were in the envelope when you went to bed, you’re not sure that they were in the envelope when you received it.”

“No; Faky or Thomas Jefferson gave it to me in a great hurry,—I don’t remember ——”

“Dismiss the witness!” interrupted Miley. “My opinion is that Osborne sneaked in and took the stamps at Father Mirard’s.”

Miley glanced up defiantly, and did not lower his voice, though Steve passed close to them, making the military salute.

“He looks guilty,” remarked Thomas Jefferson.

It was certain that his quick, brisk air was gone; his eyes wandered, and he almost slouched past the group.

“Ah-a!” exclaimed Miley, significantly. “Something *is* wrong. That hairpin knows about the stamps.”

“He must have taken them,” said Jack. “Look at him! He is slinking along as if he knew that we knew it.”

“You are saying that just because you want to believe it, Jack,—that’s all!” said Bob, angrily. “When you take a dislike to anybody, you’re willing to believe anything bad of him.”

Jack was silent; he knew that he wanted to think that Steve was guilty.

“Let us go and tackle him; you fellows can knock him down, and we’ll search his pockets,” proposed Miley, rolling up his sleeves.

“You’re silly,” said Thomas Jefferson. “We’d be jugged at once; and we don’t know that he really took the stamps.”

“I’ll tell everybody that he did,” said Faky. “That will make him ashamed of himself.”

“And how will you feel when you go to confession?” asked Guy, gravely. “It is a sin to talk about one’s neighbor.”

“Steve Osborne isn’t anything to me,” answered Faky. “He is no neighbor of mine; I never lived near him. What are you talking about, Guy?”

“I mean what I say,” continued Guy. “You cannot, as a Catholic, say things against Steve Osborne. When you have proof that he stole the stamps, it will be different. As it is, you cannot ruin his reputation.”

“Reputation!” said Faky, somewhat frightened. “Nice reputation!”

“Guy is right,” Uncle Mike interposed. “You can’t be taking away a boy’s good name without sin.”

“Oh,” cried Faky, “if you can’t say things against Steve Osborne, you might as well be a mummy!”

“It is better to be a mummy than to be in a state of mortal sin,” said Guy.

There was an uncomfortable silence. Jack felt himself rebuked. He hated Steve Osborne, and he knew well that this was wrong. Steve Osborne came before him at all times—at his lessons, in the classroom; he dreamed of Steve Osborne's humiliation in some way; and during recitations he awoke from reveries in which he had enjoyed the pleasure of unveiling Steve Osborne's wickedness to the school. Steve did not assume a pleasant manner toward Jack, it is true; but the real reason why Jack hated him was that Bob liked him.

Guy's words were a rebuke. Still, they told Jack only what he knew before. He tried hard to drive away this intense dislike to Osborne; but it came back, and at times he cherished it. Only the Sunday before he had forgotten it at Mass for a while, when he had seen Steve marshalling a squad of juniors up the aisle, and he had longed with all his might to demolish that trim figure and to disgrace him before the boys. Steve was so insolent, so arrogant, so patronizing. Moreover, he had told Timothy Grigg that Jack made fun of the professor; and Timothy had told his mother, and his mother treated Jack very coolly. But Bob Bently liked Steve,—that was the worst of it.

As they sat there waiting for the afternoon bell to ring, nobody spoke. Jack was struggling with his heart; Bob was saying to himself that

nobody could make him believe that Steve Osborne was a thief; Miley was thinking of the club boxes; Thomas Jefferson had made up his mind to search Steve Osborne's clothes; and Faky was inventing a little song modeled on "Taffy was a Welshman." As Guy had said it was a sin to sing it aloud, he merely hummed it to himself. Uncle Mike saw that Guy's face was less thin, and he forgot all about his own troubles.

XXIII.

MILEY'S REVENGE.

THE routine of school life went on as usual. It makes little difference to a boy whether he loses stamps or not, so far as Latin declensions are concerned. But for a day or two Faky was so preoccupied that he did not add even a line to his Latin ode; and Thanksgiving, the time for the receiving of boxes, was looming in the near distance.

As to Guy, the disappointment about the stamps made him ill; he was taken to the infirmary, where Mrs. Grigg looked after him carefully. He was not seriously ill; but, of course, Uncle Mike was obliged to prolong his visit.

Professor Grigg exacted hard work of his pupils, especially in Latin, by which everything in the school was graded. And every boy had the Christmas examinations before his eyes.

Jack and Miley had many consultations. Steve Osborne and Bob kept close together; Bob avoiding his former friends, and visiting Guy in the infirmary only when they were not there.

There was little shirking of tasks. Breaches of discipline were punished at once. Real idleness

meant expulsion, and only very foolish or weak-minded boys cared to risk that. The school ran like a machine, except when Mrs. Grigg or Father Mirard could add a touch of homeliness to it; and the boys, occupied as they were, had time to long for freedom with a desire that grew almost frantic when Christmas came. As a rule, they found no pleasure in study. Professor Grigg said that study should be hard: nothing should be done to make it pleasant. There were few boys who liked the work: even the oldest boys studied without interest—simply to keep their places. They enjoyed the *congés* all the more because of the rigor of the discipline.

Bob did not speak to Steve Osborne of the loss of the stamps; he was very angry that Jack had dared to suggest that Steve had stolen them, and he passed him at recess with a cool nod.

“He is too stuck up to speak to the likes of us,” Miley said; “but he takes up with a thief.”

“A thief!” repeated Jack, startled by that awful word. “We don’t *know* that Osborne took the stamps.”

“Bosh!” said Miley. “Of course he took them. Who else?”

Jack made no reply; he wanted to believe Steve guilty, though his sense of justice revolted against accusing him without proof.

Jack and Miley were on their way to visit Guy. He was lying on a lounge near the win-

dow of the room devoted to boys who were improving.

"Bob never comes with you," Guy said, raising his eyes from his book. "I am afraid that you and he are not good friends, Jack."

"We are not, Guy. Bob likes Steve Osborne better."

"I thought you said that only girls were jealous," Guy answered.

"I'm *not* jealous," Jack said, hastily. "If Bob doesn't care for me, I'm sure I don't care for him. But I hate to see him a slave to Steve Osborne."

"I would never quarrel with anybody I liked," Guy went on.

"But suppose you couldn't help it,—suppose he did things to you?"

"Oh, I wouldn't notice them!"

"Suppose he said things behind your back?"

"Suppose you said things behind *his* back?"

"I never said—much," retorted Jack, growing very hot and uncomfortable.

"Somebody must have told you what he said. I would not believe *anything* a third person told me of a friend," said Guy.

"Oh, you're an angel!" put in Miley. "You can see by Bob's actions that he despises Jack."

"Miley, you should not make mischief," replied Guy. "When two friends quarrel, they are generally both to blame. The truth is, Jack

is jealous of Steve Osborne, and Bob doesn't believe that Steve is a bad fellow. And I myself don't believe that Steve is a bad fellow,—that is, *altogether* bad.”

“He's as bad as bad can be,” said Miley. “He's a wicked chump; he blows and boasts, and looks down on people that are better than he is.”

“You mean yourself,” answered Guy, with a laugh.

Miley blushed.

“Maybe I do. He has no right to look down on me. Maybe I do look tough. I don't care if I do. I've got a mother that knows more in her little finger than anybody in Boston. She'd give him a piece of her mind, and his stuck-up aunt too, if she were here. I can afford to dress as well as anybody!” exclaimed Miley. “And if I wanted to put on style, I'd know how to do it. I'm from New York, I am. If I were Jack, I'd make Bob Bently feel that he couldn't talk about me behind my back,—that's all!”

Guy shook his head gravely.

“It is all bad,” he said,—“very bad, and I am sorry.”

“They're a mean lot, too. When we went for their boxes the other night, they'd emptied them. There wasn't a scrap of turkey or anything else left.”

Guy smiled.

“All right!” said Miley. “All right! I’ll be even. I heard the express man tell Steve Osborne that there was a box from Boston at the station; and Steve told him to bring it up quietly, and let nobody see it. The selfish brute! He wants to eat everything in it, and not give even the club a bite. But I’ll be even with him.”

Guy sighed. Jack was unhappy. He liked Bob Bently,—he could not help liking such an old friend. No matter what Bob had said of him, he could not help liking him. This gave added bitterness to his dislike for Osborne. He knew in his heart that if Bob came to him at any moment with a kind word, he would forgive him; but nothing could induce Jack to go with the kind word to Bob first.

Miley failed in his “*Historia Sacra*,” and went all to pieces in the Class of Percentage; his mind was exclusively filled with the fact that Steve Osborne’s box was down at the station.

“This is your first bad failure,” the teacher of arithmetic told him. “I shall not reduce you in the class; but if you come near it again, you will take the full consequences.”

Miley heard this threat as in a dream. He could think only of that box, and of the delightful revenge he would have. He spoke no more on the subject to Jack, and he felt that it would not be decent to drag the smaller boys into a scrape. Fortunately for him, he took all the

questions in the later Latin "quiz" with great skill; he was complimented, and the marks against him balanced. The recess before supper came, and then Miley felt himself at liberty to think. It had rained all day, and nearly all the seniors were in the barrack. Miley took "Fabiola," which had been given to him by his aunt, Mrs. Fitzgerald, and curled himself in one of the windows, which had a deep ledge. "Fabiola" did not keep his attention. How could he secure Steve Osborne's luxurious box? How? This question vexed his mind. How could he get even with the club for having emptied those boxes? The green baize curtain which hung across the window was drawn, so that only one of Miley's thick-soled shoes was perceptible from the inside of the room. Steve Osborne did not notice this. Miley heard him call to Timothy Grigg:

"Here, Tim!"

"Well?" Tim said.

"You're going to town in the buggy at half-past six to get some books for your father, ain't you?"

"Yes; and it's raining, and I've got my Mensuration to do. I wish papa wasn't in such a hurry for the books."

"Let me go."

"Will you?" asked Timothy, in a delighted tone. "I'll harness the horse, and you can come out of the refectory just after supper. I've the

toothache, too. The buggy will be at the east side, near the walk, under the big apple-tree,—mind! But what do you want to go for? You'll have to tell the tutor, or he'll report you."

"I'd like to get a letter,—a private letter——"

"Oh, that's all right! You be there."

"Sure."

And Miley heard Steve Osborne move away.

"I wish he had volunteered to harness the horse too," said Timothy. "I'd go to the infirmary at once, if I hadn't that before me. The damp stable will not help my tooth."

Miley overheard this muttering.

"Helloo!" he said. "Helloo! What's the matter? Your jaw is swelled."

"It is better than having a swelled head, anyhow," Tim retorted; he was accustomed to look with suspicion on Miley Galligan.

"Oh!" Miley said, sweetly. "I just wanted to know whether I could be of any use to you. I heard you say something about harnessing a horse, and when a fellow has the toothache——"

"Yes," replied Tim, brightening, "it *is* hard. Steve Osborne will go to town for papa's books, but I don't know whether he can harness a horse or not."

"I can. I'll harness the horse for you."

"You will! You're a brick, Miley. I made up my mind to scrap with that young friend of yours, Faky Dillon; but I will not if you'll har-

ness the horse, like a good fellow. Leave him on the east side of the refectory, under the apple-tree."

"And you'll explain to Mr. O'Connor?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Thanks!"

Timothy went off to get permission to go to the infirmary, to have his tooth treated.

Miley chuckled. He could hardly wait until the bell rang for supper. Before it was over he went to Mr. O'Connor, and told him that he had been asked to harness Professor Grigg's horse. The rule of the school was that every boy's word was to be taken at once. If he were caught in a lie, it meant immediate expulsion. Mr. O'Connor nodded; and, in consequence, ten minutes later Miley was driving rapidly toward the town. He felt entirely safe. Timothy Grigg would say that he had asked him to harness the horse; and if he brought back the books, no questions would be asked; for Timothy would not find fault when the errand was done.

"Get up, Dick!" he chirruped, chuckling as he thought of Steve Osborne's disappointment. Through the drenched fields he drove, whistling as he went; and bursting into irrepressible laughter as he imagined the faces of the club when they should discover that the contents of Steve Osborne's box had disappeared. He imagined Osborne's boasts; he heard him asking

his friends to wash down the cold turkey with the imported ginger-ale of which he boasted so often. And then—when Steve had excited their curiosity—the box would be opened! Miley burst into such laughter here that the old horse stopped, amazed. He shook the reins again, and they moved on.

Miley was jubilant.

The station-master was about to lock the door as Miley arrived. The train had just passed through; and he, fearing that the place would be tenanted by tramps, invariably took the precaution of making things tight when he went to supper.

“How do you do?” he said. “One of Professor Grigg’s boys? There’s a box here and a package of books. But, I say, I wish you’d keep house for me for an hour. I don’t mind leaving the place alone for a while when things are all right; but the catch is broken on one of the windows, and, if you don’t mind, I’ll leave the keys with you. After supper, I’ll get my tools to fix that catch. Telephone if you want me, in the meantime.”

Miley had nodded several times during the speech. The man threw him the keys and was off; he made all the more haste as the scent of fried potatoes, from the negro cabin across the road, reached him.

Miley tied his horse, looked into the box of

the buggy, and saw that it was a large one. Then he went back into the station-house. There stood the wooden ark of his hopes, and upon it was written, in a delicate hand: "Stephen Osborne, Colonnade House."

Miley chuckled. He went out again and returned with several big cobblestones. He went and returned again, until there was a large pile of stones on the floor; then he sat on the box and laughed.

XXIV.

A LESSON.

MILEY chuckled as he looked at the box. His revenge would be complete in a few moments. All the luscious contents would repose in the buggy with Professor Grigg's package of books; and when Steve Osborne would open his box in the presence of the club, he would find only stones. Miley chuckled. He felt that nothing he could do would be too bad for Steve Osborne. Nothing!

Miley was not in the habit of examining his conscience after the manner of the scrupulous Jack. Jack's hatred for Steve Osborne was a temptation, which arose out of his heart every now and then. He struggled against it, he prayed against it; and he could not tell what was just indignation against Steve's boastfulness and insolence, and what was dislike and jealousy of Steve personally. Jack suffered as much from the pangs of his conscience as from the pain which Bob's preference for Steve had given him.

Miley had hitherto always hit back when anybody struck him. He thought it was a duty to love his friends and to maltreat his enemies. He

held that everything was fair in war—and he made war on everybody who was, as he termed it, “nasty” to him. If you were “nasty” to Miley you were bad, and no affliction was too great for you. Miley always forgave every enemy that he could not catch. He was a typical school-boy, but by no means a typical Christian school-boy. He believed in a fair fight and in fair play; but if your enemy did not believe in fair play, your duty was to attempt any trick in your power on him.

Miley was manly enough, but his motto was “give and take.” You gave your enemy back, and with a vengeance, all the strokes he gave you. At the same time Miley had a stringent code of honor, the rules of which, however, were few.

He had intended to bring a chisel with him. In fact, he had picked up one that a carpenter had left in the refectory corridor, but mislaid it in some way. As he looked round for something with which to open the box, he laughed over Steve Osborne’s speeches of the day before. Miley had been in the act of taking off his football suit when Steve had come into the barrack with some members of the club. They had seated themselves on the stools and talked, and Miley had listened and ground his teeth.

“School is a bore,” Steve had said. “I was used to a great deal of freedom at home. I had

a suite of rooms in my aunt's house,—the old lady just adores me, you know. Why, money is no object to her,—no object at all. She would shower cash on me here, if there was any way of spending it, you know.”

At this point Miley had been tempted to ask why Steve has not paid back the dollar he had borrowed from John Betts, and which John made the subject of constant grumbling to his intimate friends. But he restrained himself.

“My aunt,” continued Steve, “doesn't often send me a box, but when she does it is a corker. She may not send me one this year at all, but when I get home she will make up for it. If she sends a box there will be quail in it, and I shouldn't wonder if the turkey were stuffed with Italian chestnuts. She never spares any expense. Last year—you remember last year——”

“Yes,” said one of Steve's admirers. “Your aunt's box came, but it was so warm that week that everything was spoiled, except a bottle of olives. I remember you told us how sorry you were when you saw that canvas-back duck entirely spoiled. You had promised us a great feed, you know.”

“It was an awful disappointment,” said Steve. “I shall never forget how I felt when I saw that brace of duck and a big salmon and a monstrous turkey lying there, packed in frilled paper, entirely spoiled and unfit to eat. There was noth-

ing left but some boxes of sardines and the olives."

"But they were good olives," said his admirer, looking about for a challenge.

"They were Boston olives," answered Steve, modestly.

"How about the champagne in the last box?" asked the admirer. "You must have felt bad when you found the bottles broken?"

"Yes," said Steve, sadly; "I never felt so bad in my life. And I was afraid that some of it had run out of the box, and that old Grigg might have smelled it. You see, the weather was so warm that the champagne, jostled in the car, had fermented and burst the bottles. It was an awful disappointment. There were three bottles, and they cost five dollars and thirty-three cents a piece. I saw the bill."

There followed a silence of admiration. What an aunt to have! What riches! What glory was Steve's!

"This time I hope things may not be spoiled," said the admirer. "We could have a boss meeting of the club if your aunt's box came all right, couldn't we?"

"It is very warm," said Steve; "and the old lady *will* send the most expensive things in hot weather. Bless you! what does *she* care! 'Steve,' she always writes, 'if your box is ever spoiled, I'll send you another.' But I'd rather have the

money. If it wasn't for you fellows, I'd never care to have a box at all."

His companions felt that this was a beautiful sentiment, and applauded it.

This dialogue ran through Miley's mind as he looked for a sharp instrument; and he laughed and he laughed again. And when he had found a strong, pointed piece of slate, which had fallen on the railroad track from the coal cars, he laughed again. He locked himself in the station and began to pry open the box. The light from the kerosene lamp fastened to the wall above his head showed the broad and expectant grin on his face. Ah, the canvas-back duck! He had never tasted canvas-back duck; and he thought of the turkey stuffed with Italian chestnuts. How Faky Dillon would enjoy turkey stuffed with Italian chestnuts! Miley did not think he would care for it himself—he preferred onions and sage,—but probably Faky might like it. And the champagne! He had heard of champagne. He remembered that when his father had spoken of better days he had often alluded to champagne. As Miley plied the hard, thin, pointed piece of slate with a skilful fist, he had to stop to laugh again.

The club and its box of stones! Already he heard Steve talking, while the club, in its secret haunt, awaited the opening of the box. Already he heard Steve's coterie saying all sorts of flat-

tering things, while their mouths watered at the thought of the canvas-back duck. In his mind, he saw Bob Bently, with his imagination full of mince-pie, watching while Steve drew the nails out of the box. He laughed so much at this picture that he had to throw himself back against the wall to roar—actually to *roar*.

A tramp, who was outside, tried the knob of the door; and, being a good-natured tramp, he was forced to join in Miley's infectious laughter.

This echo brought Miley to a sense of the important duty that lay before him. He went to work at the box. The lid was lifted off at last; for Miley, though greatly tempted, devoted no more valuable time to laughter; for the station-master might return at any moment.

Miley hastily removed the upper layer of thick brown paper. Would the turkey or the duck or the champagne appear first? He held his breath. Could his vision withstand the glories he was about to see?

Underneath the brown paper there was a package of stockings, and below this another of winter underclothing; a small pocketbook, a little picture of Shakspeare drawn with a pen on yellow wood, varnished; a box of biscuits and several boxes of sardines. Yes, there was a large bottle of catchup, too,—but no other bottle.

Miley looked at the lid of the box. It was directed to Stephen Osborne. It was certainly

the box. He tossed everything out on the floor. He opened the pocketbook: it contained five dollars in silver.

The kerosene lamp shone no longer on a broad grin: Miley's face was grave. He was oppressed by the thought that he might have opened the wrong box. Where was the canvas-back duck? Where was the champagne? He thrust his hand to the bottom of the box, in the hope of finding even a solitary quail. He was not sure that he would know a quail if he saw it; he knew, however, that the pocketbook was not a quail,—he was sure of that.

He tossed the things back into the box. What did Steve Osborne's aunt mean? Miley grew indignant at her. What kind of an old lady could she be, to treat her nephew in this manner? An old lady living in Boston, too, the home of champagne and quail and all the good things of life! An old lady with millions, too! What business had she to send a pocketbook with five silver dollars in it? Miley was disgusted.

“Old curmudgeon!” he said. “I'm glad she's not *my* aunt. Aunt Esther wouldn't treat me that way; and though mother says Aunt Mary is a crank, I'm sure she wouldn't be so mean.”

Miley concluded that there was nothing to do but nail up the box, and this filled him with regret. As he picked up the lid, he noticed on the floor an envelope, unsealed. It was directed to

“Mr. S. Osborne.” Perhaps this letter held the explanation of the means of Steve’s aunt. He picked the envelope up. Should he read the letter within it or not? He held it in his hand and reflected seriously. It was Steve Osborne’s letter. He disliked Osborne. Maybe there was a secret in this letter which would make Steve Osborne afraid of him. It was wrong to read another person’s letter; it was dishonorable. His mother had often told him that it was a sin. He was alone: who would ever know it? Who? God and his own conscience.

There was the letter, in its white envelope, unsealed. In that letter, perhaps, lay the reason why Steve Osborne had been deprived of his customary ration of quail, canvas-back duck, and champagne. It would be “great” to know it; it would be “immense.” To know it and to feel that he could tell whenever he felt like it; to be able to fill Steve with terror whenever he saw him putting on airs; to be able to confide the secret to the club and to draw its members away from Steve! He twirled the letter in his hands.

The temptation was great. Miley knew that he ought to say an “Our Father.” He knew that if he said the “Our Father,” he would not open the letter. But he wanted to open it, and he did not say the “Our Father.”

He looked about him, feeling like a sneak. No one could see him,—he knew that; yet the ker-

osene lamp in front of its rusty reflector seemed to be an eye. He knew he was a sneak to think for a moment of opening that letter. But he wanted to know what was in it, and there it lay in the palm of his hand. Nobody would ever think that a manly boy like Miley Galligan could open another person's letter, and he would like to hear anybody say he would do such a thing!

He slipped the letter from the envelope and opened it, crushing back all qualms. The letter was written in an old-fashioned hand, and ran thus:

DEAR STEVE:—I send you what I can. It is not much. Your bill has been paid, and this is all I shall have to spare for two months. Take good care of it. Keep up appearances as well as you can. I am sure, from what I hear, that nobody at the school suspects that you are the son of Philip Phillips, the forger, now serving his term. Above all, keep up appearances; but do not tell lies. I want you to have such an education as will take you out of the reach of everybody your father ever knew; and you will always bear my name, Osborne. Your father loves you and repents; he grieves day and night for the shame he brought on his only son. He sends you this little picture, done in his leisure hours. He begs you to keep it, and forgive him if you can; though he asks you to forget that he is your father. I put this

in the box, because Professor Grigg sometimes opens boys' letters. It is his right.

Your loving, AUNT FANNY.

Miley put the letter back, sealing it first. He went to work and nailed the lid on the box. He was not laughing now. When he had driven in the last nail with the aid of a big stone, he sat on the box and said to himself:

“You're a sneak, Miley Galligan,—you're a sneak! God's ashamed of you.”

He knew that he was a sneak, and he despised himself. A great pity for Steve Osborne and a thorough contempt for himself took possession of him. He sat on the box, wondering if he could ever look an honest boy in the face again. He began to cry, and he cried until he heard the station-man outside. It seemed to him as if he had lost something he could never regain, and this was his own good opinion of himself.

“You've been a good boy,” said the station-man, as he opened the door.

“I'm as mean as dirt,” answered Miley, averting his face.

The box and the books were stowed in the buggy. Miley drove rapidly toward the school. As he passed Father Mirard's church he did not dare to lift his hat as usual. It would be a mockery,—God must despise him; so he drove on, heartily despising himself.

XXV.

THE BOX.

MILEY drove back in an abject state of mind. He had done a mean thing, and he had done it willingly. There was no excuse for it. He had walked deliberately into the mud, and now he felt as if he needed a good bath. He had deliberately opened a letter not intended for him; he had read it deliberately. He was in possession of Steve Osborne's secret. He could humiliate him,—he could burst the bubble of his arrogance with a word. And Miley, even in the midst of his compunction, wanted to do this. But he could not do it without adding a more dishonorable act to the one he had just committed. He despised himself; he felt that he could never look himself in the face again. And yet he wanted, with all his heart, to drag Steve Osborne in the dust. Still, when he thought of the poor aunt working away to keep the son of the forger respectable and above the reach of shame, he relented, and the tears came to his eyes.

He felt that he ought to stop at Father Mirard's and get himself clear again. He was

not sure whether he had committed a mortal sin or not; but he *was* sure that he felt very nasty, and that he would like to go to confession. It was too late for that, however.

As he approached the road that led to the entrance avenue of the school, a figure appeared from behind a clump of trees, dragging a bicycle.

"Hello!" Steve Osborne's voice said. "Who are you?"

"Miles Galligan," answered Miley, briefly and in a subdued voice,—all his usual fire had gone out with him.

"Well, I just want to say this, Mr. Miles Galligan," Osborne went on, in his most insolent tone. "The next time you interfere in my business I'll appeal to higher authority. You had no business to run off with the buggy."

"Maybe not, maybe not," said Miley; "but I have done you a favor, nevertheless. I've brought the box you've been looking for on the sly of late. Here it is. Take it!" And Miley pitched the box into the road. "Take it up as best you can. I hope that I haven't broken any bottles. And if you want to return the compliment, you can give back those stamps you stole the other night. Get up!" Miley said impatiently to the horse. "*Get up!*"

Steve picked up the box with a sigh of relief. At least it was safe in his hands from prying

eyes. He had expected to find it on the night of Father Mirard's little party, as he presumed that his aunt had sent it. And ever since he had, at every opportunity, gone beyond bounds on his bicycle, at great risk. The box had come at last! He balanced it in front of him and started toward the school. He would have no difficulty in getting it into the barrack unseen,—he could make a dozen excuses for its non arrival afterward. He determined, however, to get even with Miley for daring to cast it so insolently into the road. He put forth all his strength and skill, and passed Miley just as he entered the avenue.

Miley whipped the horse, forgetting that Steve's wheel must give him an advantage; he was filled with a desire to beat Steve. His unreasonable haste, however, defeated itself: a buckle in the harness broke, and he was forced to get down to bore another hole in a strap. He looked for his penknife—always Miley's faithful friend,—and could not find it. It was gone. He remembered that he had used it as a help to the sharp stone in opening Steve's box. It had disappeared; and, as he had no penknife, he had to drive slowly up the avenue, with the broken harness. He was irritated to see Steve Osborne turn the corner of the main building, with the box in his arms. Steve had put his bicycle away, but found that the door of the barrack

was closed. Steve was happy to have that box in his own hands, and happier that he had managed to get it into the school without being observed by the club. As he passed Miley, he saw the broken harness.

“Ho, Galligan!” he said. “You’ll get into trouble. The Prof. will swear that you’ve been driving that horse to death.”

“Oh, yes, I know I shall!” answered Miley; “but if I had a penknife I could fix it all right. I guess you’re mighty glad to see me in a scrape.”

Whether it was that Steve’s box and its escape had put him into a good humor, or that he preferred to bully his enemies publicly, not privately, it is hard to say. He laid down his box, whipped out his penknife, and put a hole through the strap.

“Now,” he said, buckling it, “you’re all right!”

Miley was so amazed that he did not thank him in words. He did so in acts, however; for from the corner of the main building appeared John Betts, Timothy Grigg, and the Cuban, Juan Estaferro, who detested Osborne because he occasionally saluted him as “Greaser.” They were about to pounce on Steve’s box, when Miley jumped down and flung it into the buggy.

“Grip it!” cried Juan. “That’s Steve’s box. It has come at last.”

Steve's heart sank. He did not know what was in the box, but he *did* know that the opening of it would ruin all his pretensions.

Miley was quick. With the box in the buggy, he drove straight to the stable, and locked the door.

"Oh, it was only Professor Grigg's package of books!" remarked Juan, in a disappointed voice. "If it had been your box, Steve, Miley would have been the first to open it. Hey?"

Steve said nothing. In a few moments the bell for the last hour of study would ring, and he must secure the box.

"Well, Osborne," said Juan, "if that had been your box, your friends of the club would not have got much of it,—I can tell you that!—sure! Carramba!"

"Don't swear," said John Betts. "I'd like to see some of the champagne Steve talks about. If the bottles in the new box are spoiled, we'll begin to think that his rich aunt is a very stingy woman."

Steve Osborne said nothing. He made a vow in his heart that if that box could be saved from Miley's hands he would never tell a lie again. He was sick of lying, and he knew—as all liars do—that he could not be believed for any length of time. He had begun by boasting, to cover the real state of affairs; and he had kept it up, increasing his boasts until he was forced to invent

new tales of his aunt's splendor, day by day, to prevent the foolishness of his former boasts from being discovered. Steve did not know yet that it is very hard to deceive boys: they have a way of discovering the truth by intuition. The older a boy grows, the more easily he is deceived; but the little ones have a way of finding out things. And John Betts and Timothy Grigg had long ago made up their minds that Steve was not "square."

The bell rang, and Osborne was left alone, heavy-hearted and fearful. He ran to the stable as fast as he could. Miley was waiting for him.

"Here's your box," Miley said.

"Thank you!" replied Steve, briefly.

"I want to ask a question," continued Miley. "I don't pretend that I'm a friend of yours, or ever will be,—I don't pretend that. But I've done you a favor, and I want one in return. What did you do with the Mauritius stamps you took the other night?"

Steve looked Miley in the face, and answered, without any resentment:

"I didn't take any stamps."

"Sure?" asked Miley.

"Sure."

"By Jiminy!" Miley said, "who did?"

"Look here, Galligan!" Steve went on, regaining his superb manner and his West Point waist. "Look here! You've done me a favor, and I'll

overlook your insult. If I wanted to steal, I wouldn't steal two stamps. What were they like?"

"Mauritius."

"Yes,—why, yes!" said Steve, really grateful for the danger he had escaped. "I did see them, and I can tell you where they are. One night, during the week I was captain in the dormitory, an envelope blew from under Jack Chumleigh's pillow, before Mr. O'Connor came up. I put the envelope back, but threw the stamps into the tin box on Jack's washstand. They must be there yet. If you find the stamps," he added, "we'll consider ourselves quits. I don't want to be a friend of yours, Galligan; and you're the last man to whom I want to owe a favor."

"If I find the stamps," said Miley, "you can be as nasty as you like. But you must expect me to get back at you every time."

Steve made the military salute and marched away with his box under one arm.

"If he only knew, how he would despise me!" said Miley to himself. "If my Aunt Mary knew that I had opened another boy's letter! Oh, dear, how I do despise myself! A fellow can take a bath when he falls into the mud, but when your mind does a dishonorable thing you can't get clean so easily. I *must* see Father Mirard to-morrow."

Nevertheless, before he went to bed, Miley be-

gan to regret that he had not discovered Steve's secret in some legitimate way. He remembered his haughty air, even when Miley had gone out of his way to oblige him; and, tucked under the blanket, he was devising schemes for the humiliation of Osborne. The boys were marched in ranks into the dormitory under the charge of the captain of the night. Silence was the rule; and, after the captain had made his rounds, the tutor came in, and there was no chance for Miley to speak to Jack.

The necessity of praying that the stamps might still be in the box drove all thought of vengeance out of Miley's head. He was one of those young Christians who are always very good when they want anything; so, while he prayed earnestly that the stamps might be in the tin box, he tried hard to make God and himself believe that he would forgive the arrogant offender.

The next morning was a busy one. Steve Osborne was sullen and moody. He was devoured with anxiety about his box: he had not had a chance to open it yet. He had hidden it in the straw in the stable, and he intended to remove it to his recess in the barrack on the first opportunity.

Miley, too, was devoured with anxiety about the stamps. At the first recess he spoke to Jack.

"When you can get to the dormitory, look into the tin box on your washstand."

“What tin box?” asked Jack.

“Why, the one on your washstand, of course,—stupid!” Miley answered.

“Oh!” said Jack, who was thinking of his algebra. “Oh, yes. What did you say? Tin box? I gave it to Faky yesterday for his bait. He wants to go fishing next Thursday.”

Miley gripped Jack’s arm hard.

“Where is Faky?”

“Over in the juniors’.”

“Can you see him?”

“No. Professor Grigg says there is too much running from campus to campus. He has stopped it, except at the afterdinner recess, by special permission.”

“The stamps were in that box, Jack. Uncle Mike is saved, if we can find it.”

“We’ll have to wait for the noon recess. O Miley! if Faky has not opened the box, the stamps must be in it. If I ever wanted anything, I want those stamps. I say, Miley, we’ll have to pray.”

“It’s no use,” replied Miley, sadly. “I prayed last night, and I believe my prayers are likely to *hoodoo* the whole thing. In the first place, I feel that I ought not to ask God for anything until I can punch Steve Osborne’s head or forgive him. In the second place, I did a mean thing last night,—so mean a thing that I can’t mention it to anybody, though I would like to tell.”

“Miley,” said Jack, surprised, “you’d better go to confession. There is something wrong with you. I’m sure I’d like to be even with Steve Osborne. I thought last night,” Jack continued, in a low and solemn voice, “that I’d like to be even with Steve and not be a Catholic just for an hour or so. If I could be a pagan just for a little while and then repent, it would suit me. But, as you’re a Catholic, you’ve got to forgive your enemies; and,” he added, with a groan, “I can forgive everybody but Steve Osborne.”

“I feel the same, too,” said Miley. “I’m glad you are as bad as I am. I didn’t think anybody could be as bad as I am. It is a great pleasure to find that you’re quite as bad,—though you could never, never be so mean.”

“I don’t think that I’m much worse than most people,” said Jack, somewhat offended.

“*I* am,” replied Miley. “I’m *that* mean that if a turtle got to first base before me, I couldn’t feel meaner. And the worst of it is that I have got a chance of being still meaner, and I want to be mean. The religious life,” said Miley, with a groan, “is dreadfully hard.”

“We’d better go to confession, I think,” answered Jack. “In the meantime let’s find out what Faky Dillon has done with the box.”

XXVI.

THE RIVER BANK.

WHEN Faky discovered what that tin box contained, he was in great distress. Faky, like most poets, was absent-minded. Thanksgiving drew nearer every day, and he felt the necessity of completing the Latin ode. He had serious thoughts on the subject. That ode, if sent in time, would, he knew, make a vast difference in the contents of the box from home.

“*O rosa rosarum!*” he went on, until he had used up nearly all the nouns of the first declension. Miley had suggested “*O regina servorum!*” But Faky had his doubts; for, although Susan often laughed scornfully at the pretensions of American domestics, she always described herself as a “help.” Consequently Faky’s delicate taste recoiled before “*servorum*”; besides, he had certain grammatical doubts.

It was the thought of this ode that caused him to lose the tin box. He had determined to devote it to worms,—all he could remember now was that he had left it somewhere.

“What’s the use of genius?” Baby Maguire said, when he heard this confession. “I’d rather have common-sense.”

“Oh, you would, would you?” Faky retorted, sarcastically. “Why don’t you try for some of it, then? Here I am, working and slaving for you fellows. Do you think it is for myself I’m trying to make poetry in a language that is dead and ought to be buried? Not much! It’s for all of you. I know Susan. If a black cat jumps on the fence on any day before Thanksgiving, she’ll think it’s bad luck to send the box. Besides, if she thinks that cook is going to send a box, *she* will not send any; because as she’s out with the cook, she’ll do nothing the cook does. Now, Jack’s sure of a box, anyhow, because the cook wrote him a letter the other day. She thinks *he* is just right; but we’re not sure of *anything*. And if I don’t get an ode of some sort to her before Thanksgiving, there may be no box but Jack’s,—that’s all.”

“I’d rather do without a box than ‘work’ people in that way,” said Miley.

“Oh, you would, would you?” replied Faky. “You’re too high-toned for this crowd. I suppose you’d consider it mean to open one of those club boxes if you had a chance. You’re too high-toned!”

Miley’s face flushed. Faky’s careless words brought the memory of his shame back to him; he made no reply, and Thomas Jefferson and Baby Maguire looked at him in amazement.

“I’m not ‘working’ anybody,” Faky Dillon

went on, in an aggrieved tone. "I'm only paying a tribute to Susan in the Latin language, because she likes it; and if it makes the box bigger, so much the better."

"I am not saying anything, am I?" demanded Miley.

"But all this talk will not bring back the tin box," observed Thomas Jefferson. "There are a lot of punishments to-day. Everything seems to go wrong. The idea of sending Steve Osborne into our 'quiz'! The tutors know we dislike him."

"He is clever," said Faky. "There is no denying that."

"He was in our 'quiz,' too," said Miley, his brow contracting. "I think these 'quizes' are foolish. You have to work hard for the weekly test, and here they go and add every two weeks a 'quiz' at which some senior is the boss. It is bad enough for you juniors, but it is awful for the lower-class seniors."

"Did Steve rattle you?" asked Baby Maguire. "Was it decimals?"

"Decimals!" echoed Miley, in contempt. "It was algebra. And he was nasty!"

In fact, Steve Osborne had repented of his amiability to Miley. There are boys who never seem to forgive a kindness. So crooked have their natures become that they see in every courtesy an attempt to gain something from

them in return. They are greatly to be pitied. And Steve Osborne was one of these. He made up his mind that Miley must have had some object in helping him in the matter of the box; and in conducting the hour's "quiz"—a duty which fell upon one of the senior class every two weeks—he had done his utmost to put Miley's ignorance of algebra in as strong a light as possible. Steve had determined to show him that he need expect no favors.

As Thomas Jefferson had remarked, no amount of talk would bring back the tin box; so Miley, with a sigh, proceeded on his errand, which was to carry a message from a tutor in the seniors' campus to one in the juniors'.

On returning to the seniors', he saw that a group had gathered around Steve Osborne; and Bob Bently called to Miley, who found that a dozen boys were arranging for a game of football between the two departments.

"It's too bad," Steve said, hiding a cigarette in his sleeve as a tutor passed, "that Professor Grigg won't allow visiting teams to come here. He is behind the times."

"We've got to have a game, anyhow," said the Cuban, who hated football, and, to avoid playing, had got himself made manager of the team. "Miley Galligan here can play. Make him full-back. I've seen him practice in the juniors'."

Steve looked into Miley's face with a cool

stare. Now that the tutor had passed, he puffed at his cigarette.

“Has any fellow an Egyptian?” he asked, looking around in the aristocratic manner so much admired by his friends. “I can’t stand these American cigarettes. My Aunt Fanny always kept me supplied with Egyptians,—a dollar a package. But you can’t get anything like that out here. How do, Galligan?” he added. “Why don’t you get some buttermilk and wash the freckles off your face? They look bigger every time I see you. I guess your system must be full of iron; there must be enough in it to make an iron-clad.”

The group, even Bob Bently, roared at this exquisite joke. Miley’s freckles were hidden in the rush of crimson blood to his face. The boys laughed again. Steve’s wit was so fine, and his rich aunt might appear in splendor at any moment. How Miley despised them all, but especially Bob! He was about to retort with crushing sarcasm when he recalled the fact that *he* could not call them “mean,” as he intended to; in his heart he felt that he was meaner than anybody there.

“You’d not be likely to meet Miley at one of your aunt’s parties, would you?” laughed one of the club, pointing to a big hole in Miley’s “sweater.”

“Steve Osborne’s aunt—” Miley began, with

a sneer. Then he stopped. To say what he was about to say would make him appear in his own eyes the vilest of boys.

“What about Steve Osborne’s aunt?” demanded Osborne. “What have *you* got to say about Steve Osborne’s aunt, I’d like to know?”

“Steve Osborne’s aunt,” Miley continued, changing his words, “may be the richest woman in Boston, but she doesn’t run this school. The question is, who is to be full-back on the seniors’ team?”

“You’re not,—that’s certain,” replied Osborne. “My aunt may not run the school, but you’ll find out that *I* run a good part of it, old boy.”

“At the meeting the other day I was put on the seniors’ team,” said Miley; “and you can’t put me off it.”

“Can’t I? We’ll see. Boys,” Osborne went on, “you’re all on the executive committee. Shall we turn Miley Galligan down or not? All in favor of dropping him say ‘Aye!’”

Everybody except Bently said, “Aye!” There was an appealing and disappointed look in Miley’s eye that touched Bob’s heart. It was a dream of Miley’s—a cherished dream—to play full-back on this team.

“I say, Osborne,” Bob ventured, “that’s rather hard.”

“Discipline is discipline, and we cannot afford to have a tad like this—the cousin of Jack Chum-

leigh's mother's servant-girl, I've heard,—come lording it over us," Osborne said, puffing again at his cigarette.

Miley closed his lips hard; he began to say an "Our Father" and "Hail Mary" rapidly. He felt that the devil was at his elbow; that he must answer Steve back or choke with anger.

But Bob Bently spoke again,—he was indignant.

"Miley Galligan's cousin may be a servant—I don't say she isn't,—but I want to tell you that she is a friend of mine, and a good friend too. I don't mind a joke, Steve; but that sort of talk is what I call hitting below the belt. Miley Galligan ought to be proud to be the cousin of any lady, whether she is a servant or not. And it's a mean thing for any boy brought up among nice people, as you've been, Osborne, to say a thing like that."

Instead of answering Bob, Osborne gave an excellent imitation of his tone of voice; for Bob, when excited, spoke somewhat through his nose.

Bob turned away.

"Never mind!" Steve called out to his admirers. "He's a 'softy,'—I can bring him back when I want him."

"Why didn't you speak up?" asked Bob, indignantly. "You're glib enough usually with your tongue."

"I couldn't,—I couldn't," answered Miley;

“that is, I could if I wanted—to. If you —” but Miley checked himself; in another minute he would have suggested too much.

The mail had come in; the boys commissioned for that purpose distributed it. Steve Osborne read his short note—it was from his aunt,—and tore it into small pieces. Bob Bently walked to the shade of the apple orchard with Miley, and read his paper.

“Failure of Pacific Bank!” he cried, after he had scanned the column of baseball news, and looked for the beginnings of football. “That’s father’s bank,” he said; “and Mr. Chumleigh is a big stockholder. I’m afraid they are pretty blue at home, if this is true.”

Miley could only say that he hoped it was not true. The duties of the day began, but Miley learned nothing. He was wild with anger against Steve Osborne; he could think of nothing but him,—of nothing. At times he felt that he would shame him before the whole school, and take the consequences. Even good Father Mirard would have to admit that the temptation was very great. He went into a delightful dream over his map-drawing, in which he saw himself the centre of a group which listened with howls of derision to his version of Steve Osborne’s aunt’s letter; while Steve slunk away, humiliated, despised,—a liar and boaster found out. Oh, how Miley revelled in the thought! But sud-

denly he awoke, and said the "Our Father" and "Hail Mary" again.

The note received by Steve Osborne had run thus :

MY DEAR STEVE:—I forgot to seal a most important letter which I put into your box. Look after it when you open the box ; I am very nervous.

AUNT FANNY.

Miley's class record was not good that day ; he fought with temptation all day long. Steve's insolent words seemed to be written in acid on his heart.

In the meantime, spurred on by his aunt's note, Osborne had contrived to get his box into his closet in the barrack. He sighed with relief when he found that the letter was safe. If Miley had seen his pale face as he read that letter, he would have forgiven him. All the bravado, the boastfulness was gone ; and, as he read his aunt's words, Steve Osborne looked very wretched. He took up the rude picture of Shakspeare, and kissed it, and kissed it again.

"O father!" he groaned,— "O father! why did you do it?"

He was alone in the barrack, and the sobs that shook him and made the calico curtain of his closet tremble could not be heard. He picked up the letter again. His aunt had said that it

was not sealed: he looked at it closely. The flap had been glued, and pressed down by a very muddy hand, certainly not his aunt's. He looked into the box. What was that? Surely Miley Galligan's big claspknife,—the name burned into the bone handle! Steve Osborne shivered; cold perspiration came out on his forehead. Did Miley know?—did Miley, his enemy, know? He examined the lid of the box. It was plain, from the appearance of the box, that it had been opened. Steve could not stand up: he sat on his stool, and chewed the letter into small pieces, which he swallowed.

He must see Miley Galligan—he must know the truth. He was feverish; he could not eat at supper; he moved about as if he were a machine.

Miley went to the river bank during the evening "recreation" to dig for worms; filled, too, with some hope that he might find the tin box; for Faky had confessed that he thought he had left it somewhere near the river.

Steve caught sight of Miley, and went to him, grateful that the meeting would take place in the shadow of the trees.

Miley stopped digging, and looked up sullenly.

"Well," he said, "what do you want of me? You're twice my size, but I'd like nothing better than to have a fair fight with you."

"Did you drop that into a box?" Steve asked, tossing the claspknife to Miley.

Miley caught it,—he turned red.

“I dropped it somewhere.”

“Do you remember that envelope?”

Miley looked at the envelope, with the mark of his muddy thumb on it.

“Yes,” he replied, “I do.”

“And you read—” began Steve, in a half-choked voice.

“Yes,” said Miley, hanging his head. “And I am sorry for it from my heart.”

Osborne leaned against a knotted apple-tree, faint and weak.

“Well,” he muttered, “you will tell, of course.”

“No,” said Miley, “I will not. You are a bully and a coward, and”—he caught sight of Steve’s white face, and stopped. “You can be as nasty as you like; you can say what you like, but I’ll play fair. What I’ve read is as dead as a door-nail.”

Steve kicked hard at an object that lay in the dried grass,—he did not know what he was doing. He kicked again, and dislodged the object.

“Galligan,” he said, in a low voice, “I believe you. You’re the first boy that ever lived that wouldn’t have blurted out the truth to-day when I said what I did. It makes me shiver to think of it. Let us be friends.”

Osborne held out his hands.

Miley turned his back to him.

“No: schoolmates,—that’s all.”

“If I can do anything for you, Galligan—”
Steve advance toward Miley.

“Don’t lie,—that’s all,” Miley retorted.

“And don’t *you* open other people’s letters!”
responded Osborne.

Miley made no answer. He picked up the object which Steve had kicked. It was the tin box. He opened it with trembling hands,—the stamps were in it, safe!

XXVII.

THE END.

UNCLE MIKE was about to take his departure from Colonnade House. Nearly all the juniors had learned to love him very much. The smaller ones hung about him in season and out of season. There was a question, however, as to whether his influence was quite in a line of which Professor Grigg would have approved.

“Uncle Mike,” observed Teddy Martin, a chubby lad, “knows so much without having studied, that I think I’ll just try to grow up like him. Oh, Ireland’s the place for fun!” he went on. “There is no spot in the world like it. What with *leprechauns* and banshees, you are never lonesome in Ireland.”

“And Orangemen,” said Baby Maguire. “Uncle Mike knows more about Orangemen than any living creature. Why, if he wasn’t a Christian, he’d have killed hundreds of them. But he’s too good a Christian for that.”

“He says there are people in the moon,” continued Teddy. “He’s a dandy for knowing things,—a regular dandy. If a man can get such an education without books, I don’t see the use of all this geography and stuff.”

Guy listened to all this with a pleased face. It was delightful to hear Uncle Mike praised. But his heart was heavy. The time was at hand when Uncle Mike and his wife would be without a roof over their heads, and Guy lay awake for hours wondering how he could help them. He went to sleep, after long reflections on the subject, leaving it all to St. Joseph, his unfailing friend in every distress.

Uncle Mike's departure had been postponed, at Guy's request, so long that at last he had to tear himself away. Guy tried to keep back the tears, but could not. Uncle Mike was not only going away, but going to poverty,—going to begin life over again.

In the meantime the recovered stamps had been sent by Jack, through Father Mirard, to the great stamp store in New York; and, as the Mauritius—the most important Mauritius—was genuine, a check came on the second day, made payable to Father Mirard. And if any of my young readers will look into the stamp catalogues, they will find the amount of its value recorded; and that was what Uncle Mike received from Jack just as he was going away. The envelope containing it was thrust into his hands, and the amount was more than enough to pay off the mortgage.

Guy did not hear of this until Uncle Mike's wife told him a week later. He thanked God

and the dear St. Joseph. Now he could study with all his heart; for he felt truly happy.

Thanksgiving came, but with it no box. There was an ominous silence. No word had come from the cook or Susan, though Rebecca sent her respects through Mrs. Chumleigh. Faky's ode was sent, and Mrs. Chumleigh said that she had seen Susan weeping over it. Baby Maguire received a box of bananas and guava jelly from his father's agent in Cuba; Miley's aunts united in sending him a turkey, and mince-pies that melted in the mouth; Faky Dillon and Bob Bently had boxes,—everybody, in fact, except Thomas Jefferson and Jack. And Faky cared nothing for his home box: it contained delicacies far inferior to those prepared by Susan. He wondered and wondered; for Susan had always admired his poetry very much, and he fancied that Latin poetry would be doubly effective. But, for all that, no box came.

The Pacific Bank failure interested both the Chumleigh and Bently families, but the boys at school soon forgot it. Steve Osborne had ceased to boast, and some of his friends became so bold as to ask him whether his Aunt Fanny had lost her money. He made no answer. Only at times did he resume his swaggering air; and it was remarked that, though he was occasionally "nasty" to Miley, he went out of his way to do him little favors. Altogether, Professor Griggs'

school suddenly became very quiet. Steve seldom ordered club meetings, and the tutors said that they had never known so serene a session.

One afternoon Steve met Miley on the river bank. Miley had just pulled up his fishing line,—it was a *congé* day.

“What made you do it?” asked Steve, suddenly, looking closely into Miley’s face. “You could not have expected to get anything out of me.”

“What made me do it!” cried Miley, exasperated. “The Old Boy, I guess,—the Old Boy! And I felt so mean that I wouldn’t even say a prayer. I say, Steve Osborne, you can trample on me, if you like,—yes, *trample* on me. If you were a hundred times cheekier than you used to be, I wouldn’t answer back. I’m wilted. Father Mirard walked into me when I told him, but I am muddy all over with meanness yet.”

“I don’t mind your reading the letter,” continued Osborne, impatiently; “*any* boy would have done that——”

“No gentleman would have done it,” interrupted Miley, blushing. “Jack Chumleigh wouldn’t have done it.”

“No,” admitted Steve.

“Bob Bently would not have done it.”

“I don’t know about *that*,” said Steve.

“You think because Bob’s a friend of yours that he is mean,” returned Miley, hotly. “Well he is not. I can tell you that, Osborne.”

“Well, let it go! I want to know *why* you let me down so easily. It’s more than I can understand.”

“If the fight had been fair,” said Miley, “I’d have made you suffer. It wasn’t fair, so you had the advantage. You can chuck me into the river, if you want to, Steve Osborne; but depend upon it, I’d no more mention what I read than I’d let Teddy Martin do me.”

“Who brought you up?” asked Osborne.

“My mother.”

“She must be a mighty good woman.”

“She *is*,” said Miley.

“Well,” answered Steve, “you’re the first boy I’ve met that could do a thing like that. If you had been as bad to me as I was to you, and I’d found—no matter what—I’d have crushed you.”

Miley shrugged his shoulders.

“I don’t suppose you have known many good people in your life,” he said. “But *I* have.”

“I haven’t, with the exception of Aunt Fanny,” Steve replied.

“She *is* a good woman,” Miley went on,—“a kind woman. But, if I were you, I’d go to work for her instead of letting her work for me.”

“You would, would you?” said Steve, frowning. “Work! Why, when father was with me I never even studied. Miley Galligan,” he whispered, putting his hand on Miley’s arm, “I’m glad you’ve found me out,—I can talk to you

about what has happened. Some days in this school I've felt that I *must* speak—or die. I wanted to ask somebody, 'Was there ever any other boy like me, with his father in prison?' Of course I know there was. But I wouldn't have any other father,—don't you go and think that. I love him more every day, if he did forge that check,—no, I don't believe he did it."

Miley blinked his eyes.

"I know," he said; "I know. Just as I felt toward my father, only my father was an angel. You needn't talk any more."

He went to Osborne and gave him his hand; he wanted to say something tender and consoling, but what he did say was:

"Don't you lie, Steve Osborne."

And Steve pressed his hand and said in a tone whose softness belied the words:

"And don't you go and open other people's letters."

Steve turned away, a better boy at heart. And Miley, waiting until he was out of sight, sat at the foot of the apple-tree and blubbered as if his heart would break.

The failure of the famous Pacific Bank made a great change in the lives of Jack Chumleigh and his friends. At Christmas Jack, Thomas Jefferson, and Bob Bently left Colonnade House. Their fathers could not afford to keep them at school, and so they went back to Philadelphia;

Guy, Faky Dillon, and Baby Maguire returning to Professor Grigg's after the holidays.

Jack found things apparently about the same at home. In January, Thomas Jefferson went to the Christian Brothers' school, with Bob Bently. But Jack was put temporarily in his father's office.

Susan and the cook were on good terms again, but Rebecca had gone. They were very much subdued.

Susan kissed her young friends on both cheeks as they entered the kitchen, with a delightful feeling of "old timeness" in their heads.

"'Tis the beautifullest thing I ever read," she said to Faky. "A boy that goes to Latin school—he lives in Fourth Street—translated it for me. When I die it'll be read at my wake."

Faky was gratified. He was too delicate to ask about the box.

Susan continued :

"It was no time for turkey and cake when the family was in such affliction over the bank. And any kind of excitement do make the cook's hand heavy with pastry. 'Susan,' she says to me—for the sorrow made us friends again,—says she, 'I can't put any heart in the mince-pies, with the mistress looking like a ghost; and it's not the like of me that would run the risk of sending heavy pie-crust to be criticised by the like of *her*,'—meaning Mrs. Grigg. The night before

the bank failed I heard the banshee say 'Susan' three different times; and," she lowered her voice, "the death-tick was in all the furniture."

A little of the old chill went through Faky's blood; but he wished that Susan had sent the box, all the same.

"Is it looking for Rebecca you are?" Susan said. "We don't mention her name. Mrs. Chumleigh wanted cook and me to get places, because she couldn't pay our wages after Christmas. 'I knew it would come,' says I to cook; 'for my left ear burned all night.' But we just told her that we didn't blame her, for misfortunes do be upsetting to the mind; but we'd stay without wages till things came right. As for Rebecca, she's gone."

And so we leave our friends, living their lives in sunlight and shadow; Jack and Bob and Thomas Jefferson none the less happy for being poor.

"Our hoards are little," as Faky said, quoting another poet, "but our hearts are great." These words occurred in his last letter to Jack. He put them in, he said, because he had no time to write anything better.

THE END.

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